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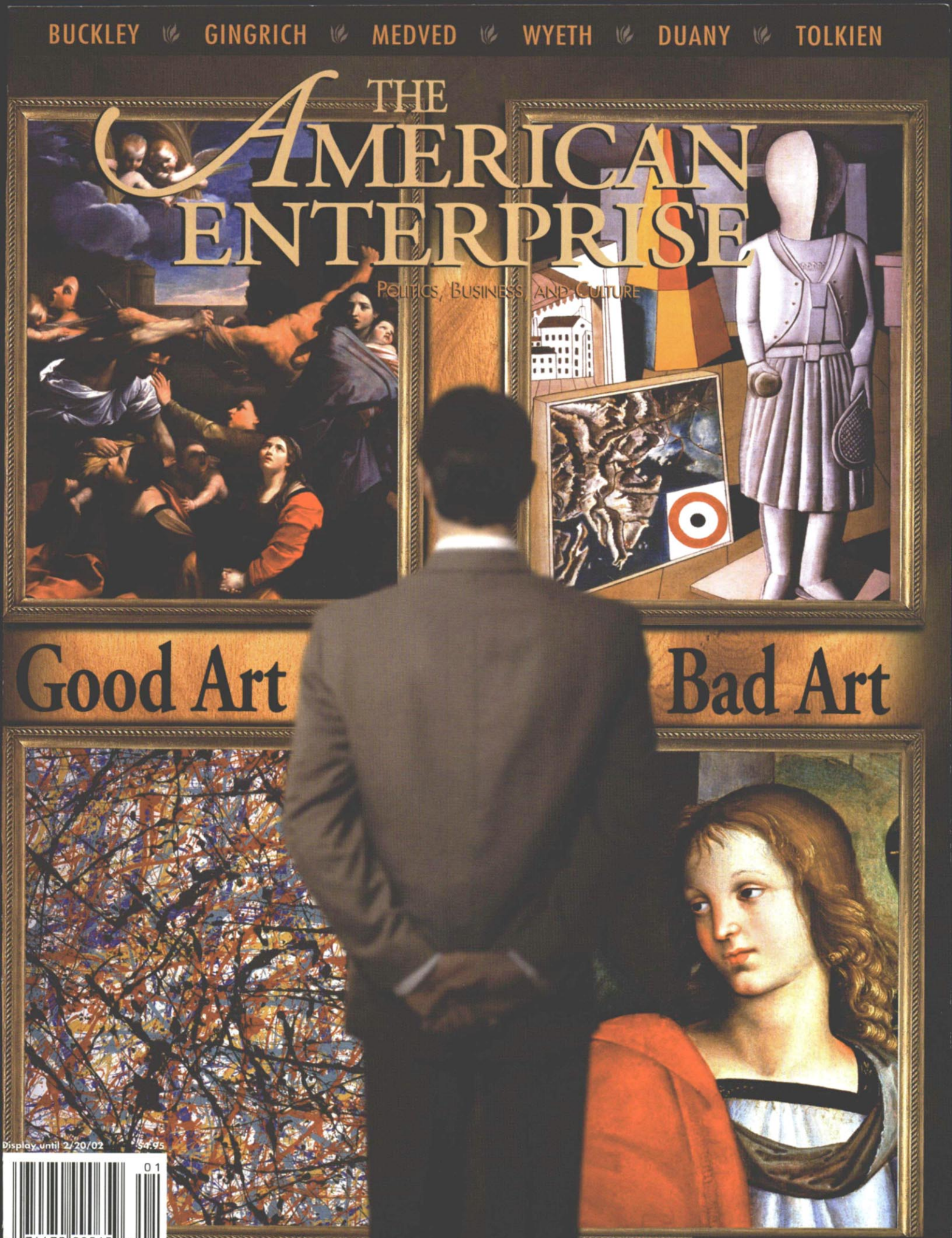

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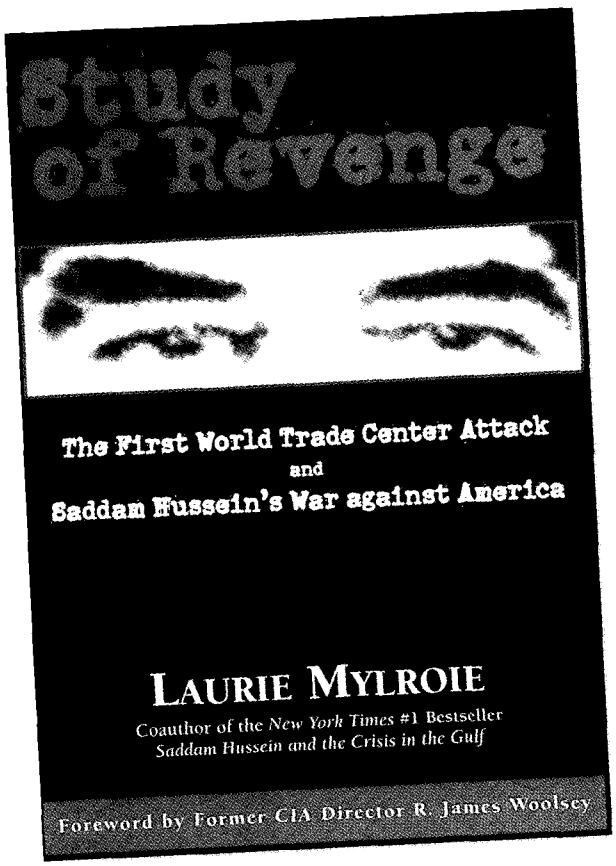

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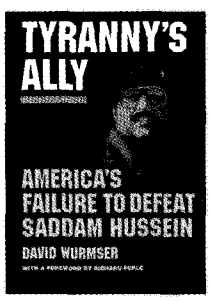

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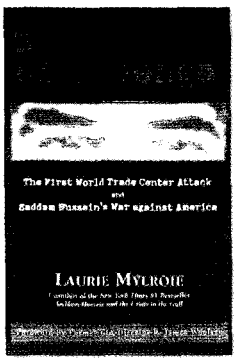

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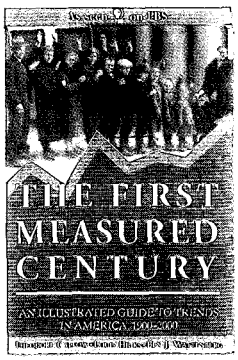

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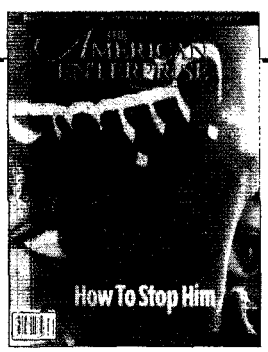

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POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

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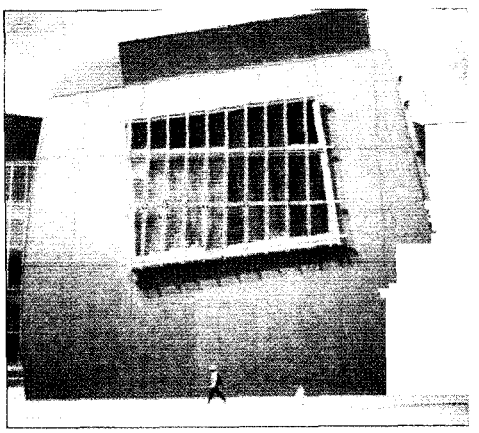

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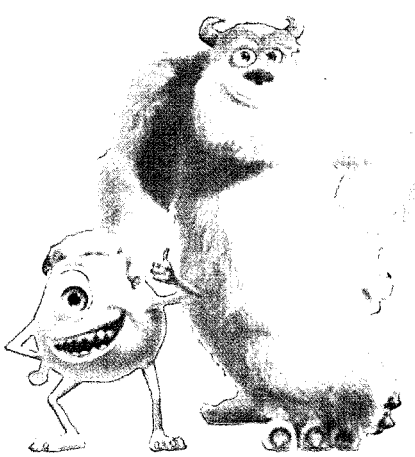

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Letters to the Editor
"The Mail," The American Enterprise,
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036,
or fax (202) 862-5867, or e-mail TAE@aei.org

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Office of the Editor in Chief
The American Enterprise
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Bird's Eye

Karl Zinsmeister

When Art Becomes Inhuman

Many of today's avant-garde artists, I've decided, have modeled themselves on that well-known societal fixture, the snot-nosed teenager. Since the 1960s, the hippest modern art has aspired to exactly what every garden-variety 13-year-old brat aims for: maximum opportunities to shock, flout, insult, and otherwise chuck rocks at polite society.

And so "artists" spread American flags on the floor and invited gallery and museum patrons to walk on them. "Sculptors" stacked bricks in low heaps and convinced collectors to pay bags of money for something they could have made themselves after a shopping trip to Home Depot. Damien Hirst piled up empty beer bottles, cigarette butts, and other garbage at a party (see Cristopher Rapp's essay on page 46) and it was instantly proclaimed a valuable sculpture. Fraternity brothers everywhere, you have a future!

Andres Serrano immersed a crucifix in a jar of his own urine ("Piss Christ"...get it?). For other "art works" he mixed pig's blood with milk, and took pictures of his own ejaculations (masterful pimpled-teenage-boy stuff). The truth is, human and animal excretions have gotten a real workout from the contemporary art crowd. Chris Offili got rich decorating the Virgin Mary with both feces *and* cut-outs from porn magazines. Awesome, dude.

Obscene language and bizarre pornography have grown like mold over much modern art. Images of Presidents and religious leaders have been defiled. Sadistic rituals like razor-cut bloodlettings have been dressed up as "performance art." Novel writers and film and theater producers have started selling voyeurism, drugs, homosexuality, and pedophilia to middle-Americans at the mall, instead of leaving these things to patrons of peep shows and trendy art galleries. One of the most heavily Oscar-awarded movies of recent years—*American Beauty*—combined all four of those degradations in one package.

I had begun to think the adolescent-minded art vandals were running out of eyes to poke their sticks into. But then Denmark's Trapholt Art Museum opened a new show. And this time the artsies threw their snowballs at the wrong car.

The exhibit included a row of ten blenders, each containing a live goldfish, and each capable of being turned on, depending upon the viewer's whim. Along with his blenders, Danish artist Marco Evaristti's creative display included a bazooka missile surrounded by tubes of lipstick, and a nude picture of (naturally!) the artist himself, with his eyes blackened. All in all, a world-class specimen of modern, teen-brain art.

At the Friday opening, two fish were blended. The museum replaced the creatures that were liquefied, "to maintain the original work of art," as museum director Peter Meyer put it. Then on Sunday (the Trapholt apparently attracts a rough crowd on the Sabbath) five more fishies were diced by members of the viewing public.

At that point, the forces of decency sprang into action. First, five surviving fish were stolen from their blenders by animal liberationists. Then the Union for the Protection of Animals got the police to order the plugs pulled on the appliances. Even with the power off, the animal rights crowd continued to fume—complaining that the fish suffered from a lack of vegetation in their homes.

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Surely you've noticed that the art smarties never lay out Cuban flags for gallery visitors to trample on, or decorate Martin Luther King's picture with elephant dung. But this time the creative geniuses went too far, and one left-wing cause (animal rights) ended up crusading against another (shock art). Will goldfish murder be the spark that sets off a wildfire against modern art's decadence? Stay tuned!

If the war over Goldfish Art was blackly amusing, most of the sophomoric obnoxiousness now common in modern art is a lot less funny. Never mind dead fish. A student taking classes in the "new genres" department of the San Francisco Art Institute recently satisfied one of his course requirements by blindfolding and gagging a volunteer, having sex with him, defecating, then giving and receiving an enema, all on an open-air stage in the company of other class members, two professors, and passersby. "Artist" Jonathan Yegge explained that his "piece" was "an exploration of the notion of the master-slave dialectic in Hegel." When the volunteer later complained, the artist stated "I'm just shocked and appalled that you can't do certain things in art school." His instructor Tony Labat, who sanctioned the performance, deflected criticism with the response that "a professor is not there to police students about their work."

Last year, *Harper's*—one of America's most venerable literary magazines—ran a major four-page article, subtitled "The Triumph of the Testicle in Contemporary Art," celebrating a "genius" named Matthew Barney whom the author hailed as "the Michelangelo of genital art." In case you're wondering, the writer informs us that "the 1990s, in the arts as in politics, were the decade of the genital." I won't expose you to the details. Suffice it to say Barney's "art" consists of photos and films of him playing with himself.

It isn't just sex that obsesses today's art avant-garde. A fellow named Maurizio Cattelan recently sold—for $800,000—his life-size sculpture of Pope John Paul II being struck to the ground by a meteorite. Rachel Whiteread created a full-size rubber and foam mattress and got $330,000 for it at an art auction. Tom Friedman put a dead ladybug in a styrofoam cup, placed it against a white wall, called it "Untitled," and sold it for $29,900.

I took some notes last year when I visited the "National Ceramics 2000" show at the Everson Museum, an I. M. Pei-designed art shrine in Syracuse, New York. A sampling of the pieces on display:

- A human head with a steering wheel attached
- A piece of rotten fruit covered with maggots
- The severed lower torsos of a man and woman, topped with steak and chicken dinners sitting on plates
- A Bozo the Clown mural adorned with toilet plunger, mousetrap, and other objects
- A portrait of a woman the artist tells us was abused—depicted bloody, cut, with lizards skittering over her body
- A face-off between Jesus and an Indian medicine man
- A pair of amputated feet hanging from an industrial chain
- A mother getting her throat cut, graphically, by a baby.

This is the high art of today. Critic Jacques Barzun calls it "anti-art." It ridicules, it desecrates, it celebrates vileness, it rejects all rules, conventions, and decencies. "It attacks everything by dislocating everything.... The cruel, the perverse, the obscene, the 'sick' [are] increasingly taken for granted as natural and normal."

Obviously, there's nothing illegitimate about art sometimes being shocking. But today it virtually *has to be* in order to be accepted by the tastemakers now guiding the art establishment. When ugly, ideological works first started popping up a few decades ago, they were respectfully described as "interesting," Barzun points out. But now, "half a century later, *unless* a piece of art is 'disturbing,' 'cruel,' 'perverse,' it is written off as not merely *un*interesting but contemptible." Tame. Outdated. Reactionary.

One way that today's art trendies get away with presenting so much junk as art is by intimidating audiences with pretentious gobbledygook. Barzun gives examples:

> When the titles of compositions did not joke or provoke, they expressed the wish to appear learned, difficult, scientific: "Investigation No. 12," "Structure for Two Pianos," "Study in Curves and Squares".... More than ever before, the creators harangued the crowd. Theories proliferated; books, periodicals, interviews, catalogues of exhibitions, and program notes explained and justified in recurrent clichés. Their art was the result of "concentrated study of spatial and linear interrelations," or of "the determination of spaces by their relation to surface and line."

Hence Jonathan Yegge's rubbish about master-slave dialectics. Or *Harper's* magazine's ludicrous blather about Matthew Barney's testical art. (Free sample: "Barney's stroke of genius was to push through the barrier of genital literalism into the rarefied realm of mythology—a mythology not just of genitalia in general, or of the obvious and overexposed phallus, but of the testicles, those most vulnerable and delicate of reproductive organs.") You could hardly write a parody more ridiculous than this; alas, nonsense of precisely that sort now dominates our museums, our art schools, our galleries, our journals, and far too many of our public spaces.

"Deliberate destruction of the ideals of Grace and Beauty characterize much of the art of the twentieth century," mourns the late sculptor Frederick Hart. Barzun adds that "the arts of Modernism have played a part in the general relaxation of conduct so widely complained of since the mid-century. The attack on authority, the ridicule of anything established, the distortions

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of language and objects, the indifference to clear meaning, the violence to the human form, the return to the primitive elements of sensation…have made Modernism at once the mirror of disintegration and an incitement to extending it."

A little incident I remember from the late 1990s nicely illustrates how current art often degrades the viewer. When Chelsea Clinton turned 17, President and Mrs. Clinton decided to celebrate the occasion by squiring her through a weekend whirl of Broadway shows—an endearing coming-of-age present that many parents will identify with. In the course of taking in three of New York City's top 1990s musicals, Chelsea and her parents were entertained by: same-sex kissing, marijuana use, heterosexual intercourse, shrill blasts of black racism and cultural separatism, the use of sex toys, and masturbation. In addition, they were mooned. This was not an anti-Clinton protest, mind you; all paying customers in the theater were mooned. Whatever happened to raindrops on roses and warm woolen mittens?

I recently came across a telling story in a short biography of Arthur Dove, one of America's first revolutionary abstract painters. Dove was a rather gloomy sort to begin with, a discarder of women, and a misanthrope. (He once said he loved the landscape of his home town of Geneva, New York but hated the inhabitants: "It is swell from 3 a.m. until 6. Then the people begin to appear.") This disdain for humanity was magnified by Dove's Modernist philosophy. One morning he dashed off in his diary, "This is a beautiful day. Am tempted to go out looking." Then he caught himself in this weak human habit of caring about things like natural beauty and comfort. He amended his entry, "Weather shouldn't be so important to a Modern painter—maybe we're still too human."

I then thought of a nearly opposite little story about the American artist Thomas Hart Benton. "One stormy night Thomas Benton, the painter, came out," journalist Joseph Mitchell recorded in 1932. "When he saw our oak fire he pulled off his shoes and sat down in front of it and talked until midnight about the beauty of the United States." Benton had experimented with and then rejected abstract painting, precisely because it was so unfriendly to everyday citizens. Both his perspective on life and his art thus turned in an utterly different direction from that of Arthur Dove. For this, he was effectively exiled from New York City and the approval of the art establishment that was then enshrining an inhospitable Modernism as the national artistic creed.

At the heart of artistic Modernism lies a deeply anti-social, even inhuman impulse. We explore this in the realm of architecture on pages 26-33, in Philip Langdon's article about buildings that assault and insult. But this same tendency pops up in all contemporary arts. A few years ago, American composer Dominic Argento explained how he tries to keep pleasing melodies out of his operas. If during intermission or after the curtain he hears someone whistling or singing a tune from his work, the composer told NPR, he knows he's failed. He believes audiences should absorb ideological messages in the theater, not beautiful songs.

"The twentieth-century writer is by nature anti-social. He despises his audience," concludes Barzun. That's why so many of them neglected clear syntax, were unnecessarily obscure, and created ugly, graceless works.

"The current philosophy and practice of art thrives on deliberate contempt for the public," agrees Frederick Hart. "An offended public is a critical necessity for the attainment of credentials…. This is shriveling art, making it less and less meaningful," he warns. "Once, under the banner of beauty and order, art was a rich and meaningful embellishment of life, embracing—not desecrating—its ideals, its aspirations, and its values. Not so today."

Hart observes the increasing "artlessness" of modern homes and places, and says "the flaw is not with a public that refuses to nourish the arts. Rather it is with a practice of art that refuses to nourish the public. The public has been bullied intellectually by the proponents of contemporary art."

He contrasts this to the attitudes of artists in earlier civilizations:

> If one visited a town or city in Renaissance Italy, art was another form of service. When the Italian peasant looked about, he saw an array of dedicated embellishments—from his church to his public buildings, fountains, and plazas. The artwork, which was exquisitely created, embraced his values, his religious beliefs, his history, his aspirations and his ideals. It was meant to give enrichment through its artistry but, more important, to give purpose through its meaning…. It was not created for art's sake but for *his* sake. Art and society had achieved a wonderful responsibility for each other.

Let me suggest one further reason why modern art is often so crude and depressing: "Attitude" has been substituted for craftsmanship. A few years ago I attended a talk by the novelist Chaim Potok about how art should be created. "Millions of artists have technical skill. What's needed today is a viewpoint," he argued.

I could hardly disagree more. The truth is, remarkably few contemporary artists have the kind of hard-won technical skills that allow a person to make great art. Yet our salons are overflowing with "viewpoint"—most of it ill-earned, untested, and entirely dubious.

Let me illustrate this with the trendy shock-artist Andres Serrano, who burst onto the scene with his photo of a statue of Christ immersed in urine (sparking one of the early wars over NEA funding). He went on to photograph mixtures of semen and blood, a woman urinating into a man's mouth, a vat of milk. (This latter shot produced nothing but a pure white page, leading Serrano's printer to ask him "Why can't we just sell the unexposed photographic paper, which is indistinguishable from your picture?" Serrano answered: "Because we can sell my prints for a lot of money.")

I heard Serrano lecture at Cornell University several years ago, and got to ask him some questions. What struck me most was how little artistry there was in the artist. He explained quite frankly that his training consisted of less than two years of perfunctory classes at the Brooklyn Museum of Art School, where he found that "I couldn't paint or sculpt at all." He then became heavily involved in drugs for a decade. At age 28 he decided that photography was something he could handle.

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"It worked!—I got the National Endowment for the Arts to pay for my tune-up!"

Before long he was photographing a calf's head on a pedestal, someone dressed as a Catholic Cardinal standing next to a bound and bleeding nude woman, Christ's head atop the bloody skinned body of a goat, a dead coyote dangling from a hangman's noose, and close-ups of his wife's used menstrual pads. He became a celebrity artist.

But even today, Serrano admits, "I don't know much about photography." Even though developing is as big a part of the photographic art as composing and shooting, he acknowledged being incapable of printing his own compositions; he sends his film out to others to interpret and finish. "I don't like to do any manipulation. Not even cropping," he said.

I was also struck by the carelessness of much of Serrano's work. He told a story about hurrying to build a cross-shaped plexiglass container because he wanted to attend a party that night. The tank, which he had planned to fill with blood and then photograph, leaked as a result of his sloppiness. So he just overflowed it intentionally to hide his leaks and shot it that way.

Lacking skills which allow some photographers to turn the everyday into art, Serrano has instead been forced to rely on extreme subject matter to gain attention. When I heard him speak he was just finishing a particularly hideous series of photos of dead bodies stored in an undisclosed morgue. One was a closeup of a female shotgun suicide. Another series was of a man who had been hacked to death by his wife. There was a shot of an eight-year-old dead from meningitis, a gruesomely decomposed drowning victim, and a decapitated woman. It was disturbing to see this gruesome inhumanity neatly captured in artsy slides, calmly narrated by Serrano's jaded voice. "I've done body fluids, the Ku Klux Klan, sexual freaks, and death," he concluded his lecture. "I don't know where to go after this."

Admittedly, Serrano stands on the front edge of artistic decadence. But he is a highly celebrated and in many ways representative member of today's art establishment. As I write, a major one-man retrospective of 60 of his photographs is being featured at London's Barbican, one of the world's most prominent art museums.

And we could cite hundreds of other examples illustrating how the combination of too much "viewpoint" with too little craftsmanship is leading modern art into blind corners. High technique has gone out the window, and it's no longer thought that special gifts or serious training are required to make art. Innovation is now all that counts. Literally any grade-school child could recreate the dead-ladybug-in-a-styrofoam-cup. All that's needed to make you an artist is an inclination to break taboos.

As a result, a huge proportion of today's artworks are just gimmicks, or commodities. Critic Lynne Munson describes a writer who composed a poem consisting of only one word. It read: LIGHGHT. He received an NEA grant for this.

In his book *Popism*, Andy Warhol reports how the owner of one of Frank Stella's all-black canvases was asked by a neighbor what it was. Informed it was a painting, she burst out laughing, then poured a bottle of whiskey over it, destroying it. Over the phone, the distraught owner informed Stella what had happened. The artist told him not to worry—he'd just whip up another exactly like it.

Warhol himself was of course a master at convincing people that even the chintziest, most formulaic work could be art. He used studio assistants and mass-production silk screens to churn out multiple copies of most of his (extraordinarily unartful) images. Not surprisingly, forgers also found it a piece of cake to make indistinguishable knock-offs of his works. Experts say up to a *fifth* of all "Warhol" pieces currently in circulation are fakes. Doesn't that tell us something about the quality of the original pieces? Isn't it also telling that contemporary paintings have repeatedly been hung upside down or sideways in major exhibits and nobody noticed? And mightn't it tell us something that Willem de Kooning's abstract expressionist compositions didn't change in quality after he lost his mind to Alzheimer's disease?

The idea that art is built out of radical viewpoint rather than virtuoso skill was brought to its logical conclusion by Modernist composer John Cage in his work "4'33" "—which calls for a pianist to come on stage, sit at a piano, play nothing for four minutes and 33 seconds, and then leave. Cage produced other compositions by tossing a coin, putting indeterminate notes down on paper, and randomly mixing recorded sounds. Karlheinz Stockhausen, another contemporary composer, insisted that what he wrote shouldn't be called music, only vibrations. (Few of his listeners will be inclined to quarrel with that description.)

Compare these adolescent nose-thumbings with the way great art has traditionally been created—through years of inspired study and diligent concentration. Beethoven, for instance, "had to work very hard," notes pianist Anton Kuerti. "Beethoven achieved what he achieved through extraordinary effort and self-criticism." The music didn't just flow out. "Beethoven would work for years on the same piece, constantly improving it." The result: art that is powerful enough to enthrall both novices hearing it for the first time and connoisseurs who have drenched themselves in it for years.

A "Calvin and Hobbes" cartoon shows the two friends out walking after a snowstorm. Calvin proclaims with outstretched arms, "This is my latest sculpture." Hobbes asks "Where?"

"All of this!" replies Calvin.

"But you didn't do anything," splutters a perplexed Hobbes.

"Right. Art is dead. There's nothing left to say. Style is exhausted and content is pointless. Art has no purpose; all that's left is commodity marketing. Consequently, I'm signing this

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landscape, and you can own it for a million dollars." Calvin takes a stick and traces his name in the snow.

"Sorry," answers Hobbes, turning away. "It doesn't match my furniture."

Calvin concludes with a sigh, "The problem with being avant-garde is knowing who's putting on whom."

The current gospel that artists needn't master certain skills but only need be "true to their own vision" is a convenient rationalization for irresponsible slapdashery. It frees self-proclaimed artists from accountability to anyone (teachers, tradition, the audience, the truth, the greats who preceded them). It exempts artists from having to revise or refine their work (that would undercut "spontaneity" and "authenticity"). And, handiest of all, the elevation of viewpoint over craftsmanship effectively places modern artists beyond criticism (Who are you to step on my viewpoint?). Modern artists may claim to be revolutionaries, but in practice they demand docile consumers offering up automatic respect, without any criticism of their dogmas.

The result is mediocrity, and worse. A few years ago the National Endowment for the Arts endorsed the idea that "the expressive behaviors of ordinary people" (for instance, "dinner-table arrangements...playtime activities...and work practices") are art too. We're all artists now—master and meathead alike—and there is no formula for separating treasure from trash.

Back when these promiscuous definitions of art were just taking over, a New York City curator named Henry Hope Reed wrote a book called *The Golden City* which compared Modernist and pre-Modernist designs of everything from major buildings to public lampposts in side-by-side photos. See two examples of his documentation below. Can anyone say our lives are more beautiful under the new rules?

One of the saddest effects of contemporary art's bullheaded ugliness is that it has made high art, architecture, and music repellent to a significant portion of the population. Everyday citizens have just said (like Hobbes above), "Sorry, that stuff doesn't match my furniture (or worldview)," and turned their backs in droves. In the opening of his story on page 34, James Kunstler illustrates today's popular disconnect from art. And the fault lies far more with our artists than with our public.

When people are offered less self-indulgent and degraded art, they respond positively. What was the most visited art show in Britain last year, and the fourth most visited on the globe? Try "Seeing Salvation: The Image of Christ," a collection of virtuoso paintings depicting Jesus, done by artists like Titian and Mantegna. (The exhibit was the only major Western cultural attraction put together for the new Christian millenium which had a religious connection.) Upon hearing the news, the director of Britain's National Gallery (which hosted the show) responded, "I am astonished."

He oughtn't have been. Frank Buckley writes in his upcoming book, "As for what the ordinary buyer wants, there is no mystery. Representational art—realism—brings visitors to a museum, and realism is what the small collector buys." Artful traditional paintings and sculptures require serious skills, however, skills only acquired through apprenticeship and study. That's much harder than buying a calf's head and taking a picture of it.

Today's public, starved for masterful traditional art, responds voraciously when it is offered. Buckley demonstrates this with examples. "At the [U.S.] National Gallery of Art, one of the most successful recent exhibitions was on the art of Victorian England, from Turner and the pre-Raphaelites to...Leighton and Alma-Tadema." These pictures, "alive with color and movement... pointing backwards to the storytelling art of Copley and Carpaccio [were] surrounded by admirers." Meanwhile, nearby modern art was "quite ignored by the crowd."

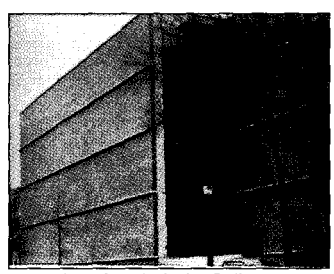
"It is the contemporary renunciation of the moral responsibility of art that is the source of recent hostilities between art and the public," warns Frederick Hart. "The public's declining conviction of the importance of art is caused by self-absorbed creations that have lost all sense of obligation to the public good and the betterment of man."

The good news is, all this is reversible. Rising above today's unpleasant and unenlightening art will not be easy; any return to time-tested forms will be resisted fiercely by today's artistic establishment, which is utterly wedded to radicalism. But Catesby Leigh's reporting on pages 36-41 suggests that a spontaneous shift toward higher and older forms of art is already underway. And Sam Torode's wonderful feature article about Andrew Wyeth spotlights an enduring model for creating art that has both nobility and popular appeal.

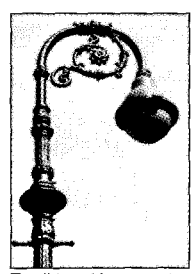
"If art is to flourish in the twenty-first century, it must renew its moral authority," suggests Hart, by "rededicating itself to life rather than to art for art's sake. Art must again touch our lives, our fears, and cares. It must evoke our dreams and give hope to the darkness."

And if the proponents of today's shock-art remain in charge instead? Western society will go on. But it will increasingly make do without the creations of living artists. "It is possible to live without art," Hart warns, "and if art continues to be nauseating, life without art will become, for some, desirable." People will fill their houses instead with computers and electronic toys, Shaker furniture, prints of classic paintings, hi-fi systems playing Mozart or Motown, grandmother's quilts, and other products created by people more interested in beauty or honest reality than today's self-anointed artists have ever shown themselves to be.

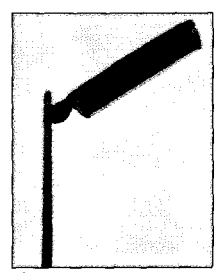
Old wing of the Yale Art Gallery, architect Egerton Swartout.



New wing of the Yale Art Gallery, architect Louis Kahn.



Traditional lamppost, New York City.



Modern lamppost, New York City.

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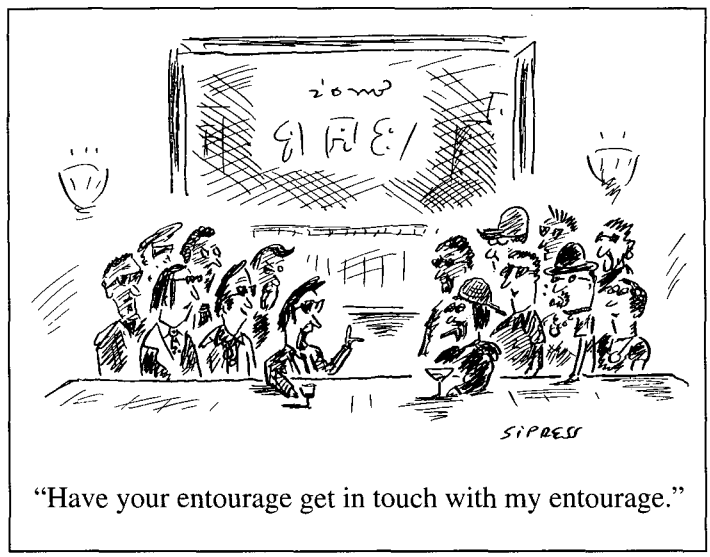
Sidelights



"Have your entourage get in touch with my entourage."

Ronald Reagan turned 90 years, 248 days old in October, making him the oldest ex-president in U.S. history. ❦ Given the choice of **George W. Bush** or **Bill Clinton**, over 70 percent of American voters would prefer to have Bush as President during the current terrorism crisis, according to a recent Zogby poll. Only 20 percent preferred Clinton. ··· "I feel comfortable with President Bush," said Rep. **James P. Moran**, a Virginia Democrat. "I never thought I would utter those words." ··· "I love George Bush right now and I always have," actor **James Woods** told **Jay Leno**. "I'm the only guy in L.A. who voted for him." ❦ Handgun sales in Maryland doubled during the week of the September terror attacks. ❦ The Human Rights Campaign, a homosexual lobbying group, canceled National Coming Out Day since it fell on the one-month anniversary of the September attacks. ··· Officers of London's Scotland Yard are told not to refer to gays and lesbians as homosexuals because the word "criminalizes" them. ··· Milwaukee is the No. 1 city in America for lesbians, according to *Girlfriends* magazine. San Francisco ranked sixteenth. ❦ Five New Jersey volunteer firefighters who traveled to New York during their free time to assist in the World Trade Center cleanup were suspended for a month. ❦ Concordia University of Canada issued a student agenda book that glorifies the Palestinian intifada, encourages the burning of the Canadian flag, and calls for a Steal Something Day. ❦ New York University student group Arab Students United distributed anti-Semitic material written by former Klansman **David Duke**. ··· NYU is the nation's most marijuana-friendly school, according to the Princeton Review annual sourcebook. ❦ Washington, D.C. tax officials received illegal tax breaks on their personal properties. The officials owe over $5,000 in back taxes and penalties. ❦ 61 percent of Arab-Americans support profiling of Middle Easterners by law enforcement officers, according to a *Detroit Free Press* poll. ❦ "When **Timothy McVeigh** did that terrorism in Oklahoma, nobody who owned a place called Timothy's changed the name. So why should I?" asks **Ghassan Mustafa**. Mr. Mustafa owns Osama's Place, a restaurant near Fort Bragg, N.C.

China banned all nationals of 19 Muslim countries from flying on Chinese airlines. ❦ Sheikh **Abu Qatada** of London, who has said he "would be honored...to meet bin Laden," has been receiving unemployment benefits since 1993. Qatada has assets of over $200,000. ❦ Italian citizens voted to limit the powers of their central government to foreign affairs, defense, public order, justice, electoral legislation, the environment, and some education matters.

NBC's **Tom Brokaw** told students at Northwestern University he opposes reporters wearing American flag pins or ribbons. ··· Brokaw's colleague **Tim Russert** disagrees. "I may be a journalist, but I'm an American first." ❦ Celebrities **Harry Belafonte** and **Danny Glover** signed an anti-war petition sponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies calling for "Justice Not Vengeance." ··· The Institute's **Eric Leaver** criticizes George W. Bush for saying the fight against terrorism is a fight between good and evil. "That again comes from the vantage point of the U.S. being the good force in the world," said Leaver. "It's a very U.S.-centric position." ❦ At a Harvard speech, academic **Cornel West** said America had been "niggerized" by the terrorist attacks. He noted that government plans to assist the victims financially sounded "an awful lot like reparations." ··· Slavery reparations "would tell Americans...that blacks, especially poor blacks, are a broken people who must be treated as wards of the state," according to NPR's **Juan Williams**. "Black people would be more highly stigmatized and negatively stereotyped than ever before." ❦ A Sacramento teacher was suspended for burning an American flag in front of 30 sixth-graders.

The ACLU demanded a California elementary school remove a "God Bless America" sign. ACLU attorney Margaret Crosby accuses school officials of "divi ding its young students along religious lines...when they should be supporting them and the values of pluralism and tolerance." ❦ A tattoo artist in Florida gave a memorable tattoo to a U.S. Army sniper heading off to Afghanistan. It shows a skull inside rifle sights with the words "Run and you'll die tired." —*BB*

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Scan

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TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS GO CHIC?

A giant new mall/indoor entertainment complex is currently being planned for Syracuse, New York. When completed in 2004 it would be the world's largest shopping destination, as well as a massive hotel, restaurant, and sports and entertainment resort seven times the size of the Magic Kingdom.

The private developers—The Pyramid Companies, who have established large and highly successful malls throughout New York—aim to build the center around an Erie Canal and New York state tourism theme.

And, strikingly, the just-announced architectural design for the project employs a handsome, traditional, retro look that emulates the designs of 1920s, '30s, and '40s historical buildings and proto-skyscrapers of the sort still prominent in downtowns across upstate New York cities (see sketch above).

The existing mall that will be engulfed and replaced by this massive project (constructed just two decades ago) employs a very different design—stark white, modernistic, and capped by a spaceship-like glass roof and metal needle.

Could this multi-billion-dollar, cutting-edge development signal a revival of commercial and corporate interest in traditional architectural forms? After decades of concrete boxes and glass towers, many Americans would be thrilled to walk back into the urban landscapes of the 1940s.

STRONG WOMEN WEAR LIPSTICK

Mary Kay Ash died on Thanksgiving Day at the age of 83. She should have been a feminist icon: a beautiful, savvy businesswoman who gave women the power to "have it all"—without abandoning their families. Her company's motto: "God first, family second, career third."

Of course, she never was embraced by feminism, because Mary Kay and her legion of pink-clad consultants who made up Mary Kay Cosmetics were anything but the victims feminists would have preferred. Mary Kay subscribed to what she called a "Yes, you can!" philosophy. "You can do it" she told her beauty consultants, and that they did. Consultants own their own businesses, set their own goals, and control their hours, and Mary Kay managed to reach out to all kinds of women, in all socioeconomic situations. With a refundable $100 for a startup-kit, and a closet full of incentives—most famously, the coveted pink Cadillac—consultants can and do go on to make six-figure salaries. (Mary Kay even made its way into Russia after the fall of communism. In 1995, Mary Kay's top Russian sales director earned more money than then-president Boris Yeltsin.)

Ash could easily have played the victim card. A woman in the South, she grew up on the poor side of Houston. Her husband died in 1963. But this made her only more determined to establish Mary Kay Cosmetics. She used her $5,000 savings and a skin-care recipe to start a company. Once she made her millions—by helping other women help themselves—she spoiled herself with gowns and pinkness—even building a pink mansion.

And what about those feminists? Writing in her 1981 autobiography, *Mary Kay*, Mary Kay Ash explained that she started her company in 1963, even before the feminists were in full swing—"but here was a company that would give women all the opportunities I never had. I don't think God wanted a world in which a woman would have to work 14 hours a day to support her family, as my mother had done. I believe He used this company as a vehicle to give women a chance."

Mary Kay didn't bite her tongue when it came to the sisterhood. In an interview, she said, "In the '60s, when I was starting the company, I didn't like the way the feminist movement was taking women—women cutting their hair short and wearing men's style clothing, trying to be men. I think that's nonsense. I think women should look feminine, and should try to look good."

One beauty consultant told me, "Every woman should join Mary Kay for a year. It gives you better confidence and better skin." It's not a model the National Organization for Women is likely to adopt, but it works for some 850,000 women in 37 countries.

—**Kathryn Jean Lopez** *is an editor at* National Review.

WINSTON CLINTON

Crews were still digging for bodies in lower Manhattan when Bill Clinton stopped by Georgetown University to deliver his lessons on terrorism. He declared that America is "still paying the price today" for slavery, greed, racism, insensitivity, sexism, the segregated South, Eurocentrism and General Sherman's "relatively mild form of terrorism" during the Civil War. In other words, the United States had it coming.

The impeached former chief executive, in addition to tossing Hiroshima and Nagasaki into his speech, reminded

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everyone about the Christian soldiers during the Crusades, taking Jerusalem with "blood running up to their knees," and killing "every woman and child who was Muslim on the Temple Mount." He complained that America was not doing enough about hate crimes, world income inequality, the deterioration of the oceans, AIDS, dirty drinking water, global warming, and dispossessed Native Americans. Islamic fanatics crashed four passenger jets into Manhattan, Pennsylvania, and the Pentagon because of Geronimo and Kunta Kinte.

Here is Clinton adviser Dick Morris's description of how Bill Clinton handled the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993: "When the terrorist gang controlled by Osama bin Laden exploded a bomb in the World Trade Center in 1993, killing six and injuring 650 others, President Clinton did not even visit the site of the attack. He remained aloof and uninvolved. Where President Bush insisted, from the outset, that the Trade Center attack on his watch was a declaration of war by foreign terrorists against the United States, Clinton treated the 1993 attack as a criminal-justice situation. His failure to mobilize America to confront foreign terror after that attack had dire consequences and led directly to 9/11."

CIA director James Woolsey adds that he never had a single private meeting with Clinton during his first two years as head of the CIA—the key period in investigating the 1993 attack.

President Clinton sat on his hands again after 19 American soldiers were killed and 372 others were wounded in the massive June 1996 explosion at the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, by a bomb larger than the one that destroyed the federal building in Oklahoma City. It was the same ineffectual comeback when 226 people were killed and more than 4,500 injured in the August 1998 terrorist bombings of the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and the same inaction the year before when a dead American soldier was dragged through the dusty streets of Mogadishu by angry crowds, and the same inaction in October 2000 when 17 American seamen were killed and 39 injured on the *USS Cole* by a terrorist attack.

Each time, Bill Clinton's failure to respond was followed by more attacks. And he continued to cut back on security and military preparedness. In 1995, the State Department rebuffed attempts by Sudanese intelligence officers to turn Osama bin Laden over to the U.S. for prosecution. In addition, CIA director at the time, John Deutch, imposed guidelines that made it virtually impossible to recruit informants from the wrong side of the tracks. Sensitivity, in short, took precedence over intelligence gathering and national security.

In his book *The Choice*, Bob Woodward reports that one night in 1995 Bill Clinton declared: "I would have preferred being President during World War II," lamenting that nothing big was happening on his watch.

Lucky for us. Considering how he handled the '90s, it's a pretty sure bet we'd all be eating wiener schnitzel and dining out at Benihana if Bill Clinton had been calling the shots in the 1940s.

—**Ralph Reiland** *is a* TAE *contributing writer.*

REAL ART HEROES DON'T REBEL

For decades, *The Story of Art* has served as the classic text for thousands of intro art-history classes on college campuses. When its author, E. H. Gombrich, died in November, his *New York Times* obituary included this passage:

"His discomfort with modern art was undeniable, and it had partly to do with his disdain for novelty for its own sake. The modern era, he said, was unlike previous eras because it was ready to embrace whatever was new. [Yet] art is not a race, and even if it were, just remember the story of the tortoise and the hare. 'If anybody needs a champion today,' he once said, 'it is the artist who shuns rebellious gestures.'"

THE IGNORANCE LOBBY

The American Civil Liberties Union seems to believe that ignorance is bliss. Especially when it comes to voting. The organization recently challenged several sections of a new Florida election law that would place a bit of responsibility on those who pick our future political leaders.

After the fiascoes created by some South Floridians in last year's election, considerable attention and money have been targeted toward improving voting machinery. But the state legislature deemed that some responsibility lies with the voter as well. The new law states that when voters step into the polling booth they should have some idea as to what they are doing.

The ACLU sued, on the grounds that the federal Voting Rights Act of 1973 forbids requiring voters to be able to "read,

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write, understand, or interpret any matter," or to "demonstrate any educational achievement or knowledge of any particular subject." What exactly does the inexcusably demanding new Florida law say a voter should do?

1. "Study and know candidates and issues."
2. "Keep his or her voter address current."
3. "Know his or her precinct and its hours of operation."
4. "Bring proper identification to the polling station."
5. "Know how to operate voting equipment properly."
6. "Treat precinct workers with courtesy."
7. "Respect the privacy of other voters."
8. "Report problems or violations of election law."
9. "Ask questions when confused."
10. "Check his or her completed ballot for accuracy."

Civil-rights bureaucrats at the U. S. Department of Justice have sided with the ACLU, incidentally, and will require the state to prove that this measure won't harm minorities.

Apparently there's still room in American politics for Know Nothing parties.

—**Tait Trussell** *is a contributor to the* Orlando Sentinel.

SELECTIVE TOLERANCE

During the 2000 presidential campaign Democratic vice-presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman observed that what separates Americans today is "not our different denominations, but faith itself.... We are a society of the religious and the secular, where practicing Jews and Christians and Muslims often have more in common with each other than with their non-believing peers."

Occasionally, though, the secular faction embraces a particular religious group for its own peculiar reasons. We have seen this since September 11 in the odd embrace of Islam by various liberal institutions that have otherwise shown little tolerance for religious belief.

Doctors writing in the October issue of the medical journal *Pediatrics* call on their colleagues to pay careful attention to "Islamic ethics" when treating Muslim patients. Islam, they explain, forbids premarital sex. So doctors should not talk to their teenaged Muslim patients about contraception. Likewise, Muslims believe life begins at conception, and they consider abortion to be murder. So that, too, should not be pushed.

Sounds familiar, and reasonable—except that non-Muslim religious Americans get a lot less respect from the liberal establishment. When it comes to other religions, medical professionals, social workers, and government regulators insist on enforcing secular attitudes toward life and death, sex, and marriage. There are moves afoot to force some or all of the nation's 620 Catholic hospitals to provide abortions and other reproductive services that the sponsoring church and congregations deem immoral.

After September 11, some New York City public schools gave Muslim students permission to use classrooms for prayer during their holy month of Ramadan. This is the same school system that not only vehemently forbids Christian and Jewish prayer, but has banned the Boy Scouts from its buildings because of the traditional moral values to which the Scouts subscribe. Apparently sometimes the Left's multicultural fetish will trump even its animosity toward religion.

—**Kathryn Jean Lopez** *is an editor at* National Review.

SAFE FROM GOD AND COUNTRY

In the left-wing hothouse of Madison, Wisconsin much of September and October was spent arguing that it is hurtful and divisive to allow the national anthem and Pledge of Allegiance into local schools. The town's mandarins decided that the national anthem could be played, but never sung, in classrooms—to avoid the taint of lyrics mentioning bombs and missiles. The Pledge of Allegiance, they decreed, could be taught but never formally recited—because some individuals might object to the "one nation under God" reference.

No word on whether the soldiers currently risking their lives to secure the peace of American cities such as Madison might object to those who freeload on this civilization by enjoying its many private liberties without ever committing to the maintenance of those liberties.

FAITH AND HOPE DASHED BY CHARITY

After September 11, Americans have, famously, given much time, blood, and money to the victims of the terrorist attacks. As hideous as the events were, there was great comfort to be found in the care and aid offered by so many citizens of this country under attack.

Alas, the hands of human wickedness have reached even here. While donations of time and blood surely reached their intended destinations, money is a different matter. Kay Hymowitz reports in the fall issue of *City Journal* that much of the cash donated to the "September 11 Fund" or "Tribute to Heroes" will actually end up feeding nothing more than New York City's bulging social-services bureaucracies and race-politics factories.

The Legal Aid Society "received $171,000 'to provide emergency civil legal assistance.'" Nearly $1 million is designated for the Mental Health Association of New York. The September 11 Fund will hand over $50,000 "to document and inform authorities of bias incidents against members of immigrant groups," and $30,000 to the Asian-American Legal Defense Fund in case Asians feel slighted. The Fund is also granting $10,000 to help "Guyanese immigrants in the Richmond Hill area of Queens deal with fear, bias incidents, and concerns of the undocumented."

Eternal vigilance is needed not only against renewed terror attacks, but also against perversions of charity.

CHINA'S FAKE CAPITALISM

When investors buy stock in a corporation, they want to make sure the company has an independent board of directors, that its books have been audited by professional accountants, and that its CEO has authority to make decisions about hiring, firing, and investment.

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Yet as panelists at a recent American Enterprise Institute seminar noted, few of these safeguards exist reliably among nominally independent companies in China.

All of the more than 1,000 companies on the Shanghai Stock Exchange are state-controlled, with 54 to 60 percent of the stock in government hands. The government and Chinese Communist Party also control most nominations to Chinese boards of directors. Even very large Chinese companies have assets that can be seized by the government at any time. Small print in a share offering by the giant Chinese National Petroleum Corporation revealed that 90 percent of the land on which the company drills is owned by state entities and unlikely ever to be privatized.

There are very few professional accountants in China, so most companies engage in dubious financial practices. This September, one firm caught transferring 95 percent of its assets to another company placed a full-page ad in Chinese financial newspapers, apologizing to investors and promising not to do it again. As much as 80 percent of publicly traded Chinese companies produce fraudulent financial statements.

The dubious practices of large Chinese corporations hurt legitimate entrepreneurs starved for capital. They also harm China's workers, who are prodigious savers but can only put their money in state-owned banks or the Chinese stock market, both of which offer poor returns. If China doesn't develop well-run private companies, it is likely to lag economically for the foreseeable future.

GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN GREEN

Robert Nilsson, a toxicologist at Stockholm University, recently explained at a Cato Institute forum that thanks to environmentalist overreactions, consumers can't buy or use many useful products in his country.

Wite-Out, for example, is an illegal product in Sweden. Regulators are in the process of outlawing lead batteries in cars. Homeowners buying paint will find only extremely shoddy products on store shelves. And nearly all pesticides and herbicides in Sweden are either banned or only available through expensive licensed contractors. Homeowners with a wasp or cockroach problem can either drizzle hot water on the beasts, hire a professional exterminator, or fly to America and stock up at Home Depot.

Nilsson warns that Swedes could persuade the European Union to make what they call "the precautionary principle"—which eliminates all products except those proven free of environmental complications—into EU law. (A committee, including Swedish representatives, is currently revising European environmental regulations.) Should Europe adopt the precautionary principle, it's possible regulators could insist the principle be implemented worldwide in future global trade rounds. If that happens, Nilsson warns, "free trade could be at risk."

A LAST DRAG?

You probably didn't know that the National Gay Smoke-Out took place this November. Why homosexuals need their own occasion to quit puffing is not clear. The whole idea is a bit ironic, given the fact that engaging in gay sex is much more dangerous than being an active smoker.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the majority of all AIDS cases can be linked directly to homosexual activity. And there is evidence the problem is getting worse despite new drug "cocktails" which have significantly cut AIDS death rates in recent years. According to a California-based survey conducted by the CDC, HIV-positive gay men have unprotected sex more than 30 percent of the time. A study of young gay men conducted by Saint Paul's Hospital in Vancouver finds the average life expectancy of a 20-year-old homosexual man to be eight to 20 years less than that of the total male population. According to the researchers, "nearly half of gay and bisexual men currently aged 20 years will

THOSE VITAL SOCIAL PROGRAMS

The Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported in November that federal AIDS prevention money is paying for workshops that encourage sexual activity and meet the legal definition of obscenity. Government investigators reported that taxpayer-funded programs like the "Great Sex Workshop" and "Booty Call" explored sex taboos and promoted "erotic fun." The funding came from $698,000 of "AIDS prevention" funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control to the Stop AIDS Project of San Francisco.

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GOVERNMENT HEALTH CARE AT ITS BEST

Britain's National Health Service is the Rolls-Royce of socialized health care when it comes to government spending and coverage requirements, but it has long performed like a Yugo from the point of view of patients. Recently, the European Court of Justice ruled that delays in treatment for sick Britons were so "undue" that the National Health Service has to pay for patients to be treated abroad in order to cut down long waiting lists. At present, about a million Britons are awaiting treatment under the state-run system. More than 40,000 people have been waiting for more than a year for operations.

not reach their 65th birthday."

But what of the risks of smoking? There's lung cancer, throat cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic lung infection, and more. The CDC declares that over 400,000 Americans die every year from smoking-related illnesses. Cigarettes take about three to seven years off the typical smoker's life, according to Harvard economist Kip Viscusi. As the prominent warning on the pack makes clear, smoking is bad for you.

In most cases, smoking, even puffing like a chimney, takes far fewer years off a man's life than does gay sex. Maybe the organizers of the National Gay Smoke-Out should just butt out.

THE DIRT ON SAN FRAN

My family recently spent some time vacationing in San Francisco. After a few days I was glad to go back home to San Diego. I couldn't help but notice the change in this aesthetically stunning city. San Francisco seemed, in many senses, dirty.

Maybe it was the trash blowing through the streets. Maybe it was the ever-present graffiti in every part of town. We walked five blocks through North Beach for an excellent Italian meal and I was shocked to see every street sign violated with letters that made no sense. I snuggled my children close.

San Francisco, amazingly, seemed dreary. Maybe it was the intimidation of the constant parade of homeless people. My heart hurt for the hordes that I saw in the gutters, street corners, and alleys all over. Three were "living" in our motel's parking lot in a "good" part of town.

San Francisco seemed dark. Maybe it was the billboard I saw on our way to the Marina for a picnic lunch. "Save a life, shoot-up with a friend," it proclaimed, promoting an actual city initiative encouraging "responsible" drug use. Are they joking?

The final straw was when my seven-year-old son said, "Mommy, where's the hotel Bible? It's not in the drawer." He persisted, so I finally called the front desk.

"We had them removed," the clerk abruptly replied. "We have a socially diverse clientele, and don't want to offend them."

When I finally fled this unfriendly city by the bay I felt just one emotion: relief.

—**Suzy Ryan** *is a successful business executive now raising her children at home.*

LOW-FLYING HIGH SCHOOLS

For years, bureaucrats around the country have bandied about high-school graduation rates of around 86 percent as evidence that America's public schools work. But many of these high-school "graduates" did little more than warm a chair for four years.

A new study from the Manhattan Institute and the school-choice advocacy group Black Alliance for Educational Options shines some light on official graduation rates. Rather than the 86 percent graduation rate released by the federal government, the Manhattan Institute's Jay Greene finds that high-school graduation stands at only 74 percent. While nearly 80 percent of whites finish high school, blacks and Latinos finish secondary school at truly dismal rates: 56 percent and 54 percent respectively.

Greene took the commonsense approach of counting the number of eighth-graders in public schools during the 1993-94 school year and comparing it to the number of graduates in 1997-1998. The disparity between official counts and the new study comes from the government's practice of counting students who hold General Equivalency Development credentials (GED) as graduates. But students with GEDs took some review courses and an exam; they didn't finish high school.

While supporters of the educational status quo might take comfort from the reasonably high GED completion rate among dropouts, most research has shown that GEDs don't come anywhere near the value of completing high school. In one widely cited study, Columbia University's Stephen Cameron and University of Chicago economist James Heckman found that native-born males with GEDs earned no more than high-school dropouts.

But even if GEDs were as good as high-school graduation, the large number of people that need to resort to them shows that America's public schools fail far too many families. Greene's study finds the worst graduation rates where one would expect them: heavily minority inner-city school districts like Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Memphis. In Cleveland, the very worst of 50 districts Greene examined, only 28 percent of eighth-graders earned a sheepskin four years later. Even in Fairfax County, a rich Washington, D.C. suburb with the highest graduation rate in the study (87 percent), nearly a quarter of blacks dropped out.

Not surprisingly, these results have created demand for radical educational change in some places. Cleveland and Milwaukee have become centers for experiments with vouchers useable at private schools. Chicago has created dozens of small, new schools with higher standards and freedom from bureaucracy. Memphis is trying to improve educational quality through rigorous testing and higher standards.

Whether these efforts will improve today's dismal graduation rates is not clear. But this latest study is one more strong argument for liberating parents—particularly low-income minority parents—from the tyranny of dysfunctional school bureaucracies.

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Forward Observer

James Glassman

Small Investors Show Grace Under Pressure

During the 1990s stock-market boom, opponents of Social Security reform repeatedly warned of a day when share prices would decline, and the allure of personally owned and managed retirement accounts would vanish. Americans would become grateful for a government program that provided them with a guaranteed pension—even if it's a small one.

Well, the day has come. Last year, for the first time in a decade, the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 Stock Index fell. A $100,000 nest egg invested conservatively in a broadly diversified portfolio of stocks at the start of 2000 was, 23 months later, worth just $78,000. A similar investment in the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite Index was worth only $47,000.

It's been an ugly bear market. Most workers with a 401(k) plan—the tax-favored retirement account owned by roughly two out of five working families—have recently seen a depletion of their assets. After the destruction of the World Trade Center the markets shut down for six days. During the first week they were reopened, the S&P fell 11 percent.

So the stock market of 2000 and 2001 provides a real-life test of the theory espoused by foes of Social Security reform. And it's a test Americans have passed with excellent grades.

The best way to gauge the response of small investors to the stock-market decline is to examine the flow of cash out of and into mutual funds that primarily own stocks. According to the Investment Company Institute (ICI), for the full year 2000 Americans withdrew about $800 billion from stock funds and added nearly $1.1 trillion: a record-setting net inflow of $274 billion. And, remember, stocks *fell* 9 percent overall that year. For the first nine months of 2001 (a period that includes the terror attacks), the net inflow of cash into stock funds was $13 billion—small, but still positive. This happened even though the market was, at that point, down 18 percent for the year.

The *Wall Street Journal* showed its admiration in an article on October 22 headlined, "Once Again, Small Investors Stay Put When Stock Prices Declined." Individual investors have emerged, wrote E. S. Browning, as "the market's stalwarts." Trading in small blocks (100 shares or fewer) actually declined by one-third on the first day of trading after the attack, as small investors sat tight. Institutional investors, by contrast, rushed for the exits when the market reopened, with trading in large blocks of shares (10,000 or more) jumping in volume from an average of 600 million to 1.6 billion shares.

Small investors were not oblivious to the economic threat raised by terrorism. After all, they did withdraw $29.5 billion from stock mutual funds in September—"the largest one-month exodus of cash on record," according to the ICI. But this figure is dwarfed by the $3 trillion they had invested in those funds in total. In other words, the average investor with $50,000 in mutual funds shifted $500 of it from stocks into bonds during September—hardly a panicky move. And, it appears there was a strong surge of small investor money back into the market during October.

But will this demonstrated faith in stock investing, even during the bleakest times, translate into acceptance of Social Security reforms that give Americans the option of personal investment accounts, as favored by President Bush and former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY)? Hints are very favorable.

An August Gallup Poll found that 62 percent of Americans favor (and 34 percent oppose) a proposal "that would allow people to put a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes into personal retirement accounts that would be invested in private stocks and bonds." When that poll was taken, the bear market had already dropped the S&P by more than a fifth, and the Nasdaq by two-thirds from their levels 15 months earlier.

Currently, 61 percent of U.S. families have money invested in the stock market—through an individually directed retirement account, in a mutual fund, or in individual shares. By a three-to-one margin, these investors admit to having lost money over the previous year. Yet they remain optimistic that they will be winners in the long run. And Americans as a whole believe (by 53 to 30 percent, according to Gallup) that stock-investment accounts will strengthen rather than weaken Social Security.

And they're right. According to a study by Bill Shipman and Melissa Hieger of State Street Global Advisors, it would require a stock-market crash of 50 to 70 percent, occurring right on the brink of retirement, to make low-income workers worse off with private accounts than under Social Security. For workers of average incomes, the crash would have to be bigger.

Opponents of Social Security reform got the bear market they so dearly desired over the past two years. But it still may not derail their nemesis. Small investors have responded with maturity, intelligence, an appreciation of market history, and grace under pressure. It's not the first time the Left has underestimated average Americans, and it won't be the last.

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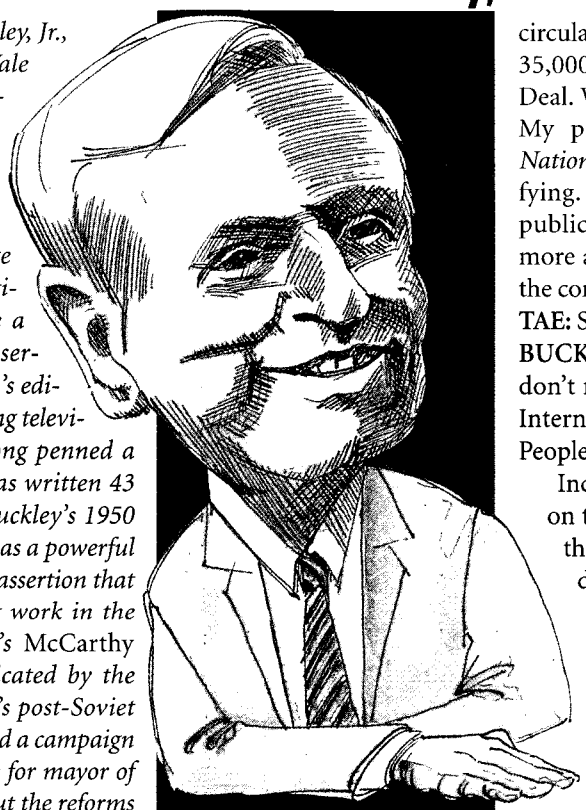
"Live with TAE

A founding father of American conservatism talks about the magazines of the Right, pop culture, left-wing children, battling communism and spies, and Elvis Presley.

William F. Buckley, Jr.

In November 1955, William F. Buckley, Jr., a World War II Army veteran, Yale graduate, and former Central Intelligence Agent (his main job was editing a document describing Soviet communism's aims for world domination), founded National Review. *The magazine became an articulate and intelligent voice of Cold War anti-communism, and Buckley became a maestro of modern American conservatism. In addition to serving as* NR*'s editor in chief he hosted the long-running television program "Firing Line," has long penned a popular syndicated column, and has written 43 novels and works of non-fiction. Buckley's 1950 book* God & Man at Yale *still stands as a powerful indictment of higher education. His assertion that the Communist Party was hard at work in the United States, presented in 1954's* McCarthy and His Enemies, *has been vindicated by the emergence of evidence from Russia's post-Soviet archives. In 1965, Buckley even waged a campaign as the Conservative Party candidate for mayor of New York City. John Lindsay won, but the reforms that Buckley championed more than 30 years ago continue to resonate.*

At 76, Buckley is as prolific as ever. TAE *associate editor John Meroney interviewed him shortly after the release of his latest book,* Elvis in the Morning, *a fictional story of a boy's coming of age in the Elvis Presley era.*



The word to Saddam Hussein ought to be: We are coming to Baghdad.

TAE: Several of the warhorse publications of the conservative movement have fallen on hard times. *The American Spectator* is virtually defunct; *Policy Review* has faded to a tiny circulation; even *The Weekly Standard* is reportedly on shaky ground. Are you optimistic about conservative journalism when each subsequent generation of Americans seems less literate and more oriented toward electronic devices?

BUCKLEY: There's a real problem. But, look, when Franklin Roosevelt became President, the circulation of *The New Republic* was only about 35,000 and it dictated the policies of the New Deal. When Ronald Reagan stood up and said, My policies derived from what I read in *National Review*, that was, of course, very gratifying. It's almost inevitable that some of our publications would falter when people spend more and more time watching television or on the computer.

TAE: So, do you read *National Review Online*?

BUCKLEY: No. I read the print magazine. I don't read easily online. The challenge for the Internet is, How do we turn that into income? People have to get paid.

Incidentally, all this is as true on the Left as on the Right; *The Nation* is more robust now than it used to be, but it loses money, and so does *The New Republic.* One has to persuade people willing to make a sacrifice to help sustain these kinds of magazines, because it is publications like ours that create new crystallizations.

On certain issues, we come to hard conclusions. On the Soviets, for example, we came to a hard conclusion shortly after World War II, and we stayed there until the Soviet Union collapsed. Today, beyond the current war on terrorism, the issues are: How do we deal with China? What do we do with the World Trade Organization? Should we champion free trade? All that's in flux, especially after the terrorist attacks. As a conservative, what one has to be hopeful for is that the basic guidelines stay in place. *National Review* and *The American Enterprise* will be helpful in this regard.

TAE: Recently, Rudolph Giuliani has been crowned "The Mayor of America." Some have compared his leadership spirit after September 11 to that of Winston Churchill during the bombing of London. How do you think he has done as mayor?

BUCKLEY: He's been very effective, and that's in large part due to his personality. He's a curmudgeon, and New York really needs a curmud-

Illustration by Lucinda S. Levine

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geon in that job.

TAE: What did he accomplish?

BUCKLEY: Look at the decline in crime. Of course, that was a national phenomenon, too. And New York City still has many challenges. Though Giuliani sharply reduced the number of people who work for the city, the number is still huge, and the demands of that contingent are out of proportion to the rest of the population. Schooling remains abominable. But for ideological reasons, it becomes almost impossible to do anything about it. Another major economic problem is the municipal unions. Even when I ran for mayor in the mid '60s, they were a foreseeable problem.

TAE: Which John Lindsay's administration only made worse.

BUCKLEY: Well, when he became mayor, he gave everyone the kind of privileges that had been restricted to people who endanger their lives for a living, such as police and firemen. New York City suddenly had tons of people who, at age 40, could retire on two-thirds of their pay for the rest of their lives, then they'd go out and get another job. That's a massive overhead for the city.

Then there are ravages like rent control. Giuliani didn't solve these things, and the only way we'll get closer to correcting them is if enough people ask, Do we really want to live in this place? New York City is so marvelous in terms of what it offers. But having access to the city is so costly that I don't think it's possible to predict that ten years from now New York will be as vibrant as it has been over the last few years.

TAE: There seems to be a debate within the Bush administration over how far the U.S. should take the war against terrorism. Some seem to argue that we should seize this as a chance to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Do you think we should?

BUCKLEY: We must make this a war of decisive confrontation, and the theater for that is Iraq. The U.S. made a serious mistake in failing to consummate the Gulf War. We lost the first round when we called an end to the engagement before uprooting the prime instigator of the aggression. The word to Saddam Hussein ought to be: We are coming to Baghdad. From here on, enemies who are associated with terrorist activity will not cohabit the globe with America.

TAE: Before terrorism, America was threatened by communism. Yet for many years, a cottage industry existed in journalism and the history profession to argue that Americans who actively resisted communism were unfair and maybe crazy.

I was in the CIA. I feel intense indignation about someone who would actually betray human beings to their deaths.

BUCKLEY: Anti-communists were harshly undermined. The establishment just refused to believe that somebody of the elite social, intellectual, and political background of Alger Hiss, for instance, could actually be engaged in treasonous communist activity. When Whittaker Chambers asserted that Mr. Hiss had been, this was hotly contested during two trials in which Chambers finally prevailed, yet many liberals still refused to believe him.

Chambers didn't just blow the whistle on Hiss's perfidy, he was a prophet in the broader sense. He wrote this masterly book, a throbbing intellectual and spiritual tonic, called *Witness*. Political columnist Robert Novak told me that he'd read *Witness* one year after it was published, and it changed his life. Novak said it made him a conservative, and years later it made him a Christian. He said the influence of the book stays with him. That's true of many who read it.

TAE: Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, much evidence has emerged of deeply entrenched communist infiltrators in the United States and elsewhere. Do you think this will reverse the stereotype of the 1940s and '50s as the "Red Scare" era?

BUCKLEY: What we now know about the extent of Soviet penetration and intelligence, here and especially in England, is extraordinary. The communist spy Kim Philby very nearly became the head of England's main intelligence agency MI6. He revealed to Moscow ultra-secret conversations between Truman and Churchill. We *had* to defend ourselves against that.

Henry Kissinger once said, "The trouble with Senator Joe McCarthy is that he didn't go far enough." He was exaggerating, of course. But I wonder. With the Cold War over, people actively forget the intense degree of the Soviet threat. People don't feel the kind of strategic gratitude that's appropriate for those who helped us to survive this palpable threat.

TAE: The recently discovered spying for Russia done by former FBI agent Robert Hanssen also seems extremely serious.

BUCKLEY: But there's a lack of indignation about him. Yes, Hanssen will probably go to jail for a long time, maybe for life. But his case is treated as a routine misadventure. Look, I was in the CIA. I feel intense indignation about someone who would actually betray human beings—not only Americans but Russians, too. Fury at people who betray others to their deaths has to find an apt form of public disapprobation—and it hasn't with Robert Hanssen.

TAE: What about Jonathan Pollard?

BUCKLEY: There's a heavy Jewish lobby for let-

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ting Jonathan Pollard off. A few years ago, I was given an award by the Anti-Defamation League, and in accepting it, I gave a speech about anti-Semitism. Afterwards, someone came up to me and said, "Don't you think Pollard ought to be let go?" I said, "No. I think he ought to be executed." That didn't go over well. It's proper to feel indignation for traitors, but in the absence of a palpable threat, what they did sometimes seems to be more innocent.

TAE: You've just written a new novel—about Elvis Presley. How did William F. Buckley decide to write a whole book about the King?

BUCKLEY: Well, I didn't set out to write a book about Elvis. My goal was to chronicle a young American who goes left. In so doing, I wandered into the late '50s—and Elvis Presley is everywhere. He was an enormous cultural presence. He intrigued me because he was iconoclastic and permissive. I read as many things about Elvis Presley as I could, and I believe he's faithfully reproduced. There's the good *and* the bad.

TAE: But couldn't you have written the same coming-of-age story using another cultural figure, such as John Wayne or Frank Sinatra? Surely their style would have been closer to your political philosophy.

BUCKLEY: Well, there's so much drama in the Elvis scene, partly because he was so young and exuberant. There are fascinating elements of his story, such as when he goes to see President Nixon in 1970 to get deputized as an arm of the law—while he's committing suicide with prescription drugs. Elvis was a true eccentric; he didn't follow any patterns. He was religious and patriotic. He didn't smoke, drink, or swear. He had this enormous impact, but people still aren't quite sure how to distill all of it.

TAE: You reconstruct Elvis's meeting with President Nixon in your book. Nixon tells him, "I want to thank you for your support of our war on drugs," and deputizes him.

BUCKLEY: The conversation between Elvis and the President is reproduced almost exactly as it took place. And the details about Elvis being taken on a tour around the White House are historical fact.

TAE: Conservatives were among those who criticized Elvis when he became popular in the '50s, not just because of his music, but because of how he performed physically. In 1956, there probably weren't too many *National Review* subscribers who approved of his gyrating.

BUCKLEY: You're probably right. For Elvis, rock 'n' roll simply required that kind of physical action. He maintained, with sincerity, I think, that he didn't intend to be provocative; this was just the way he felt about the music. His hips had to sway. Eventually, people got used to it, but for a while the TV networks wouldn't allow a camera to photograph him below the waist. Today, Elvis Presley seems like such a conservative figure, especially when compared with the excesses of many contemporary musicians.

TAE: One of the great influences on your novel's protagonist is a socialist teacher who tells him that the only thing that distinguishes America from other nations in the world is its capitalist wealth and nuclear army. He argues that the Cold War is a great distraction from the pursuit of a world in which property is commonly owned. He quotes Thoreau.

BUCKLEY: Yes, my fictional hero Orson was moved by that teacher, like so many students are moved by their teachers in real life. Partly because of that influence, Orson becomes this totally committed left-wing 18-year-old. That's what I set out to write about. I wanted to find out what was going on in the minds of members of that generation. I saw novelistic possibilities in the relationship between Elvis and Orson, and the book begins when Orson is 15 and Elvis is 21. Then, it's a paternal relationship. Decades later, it's the other way around: Orson is looking after Elvis—or at least trying to. Nobody ever succeeded in doing that.

TAE: Orson also comes into contact with another iconoclastic American figure—Senator Barry Goldwater, whom you actually knew.

BUCKLEY: Orson falls in love with a girl who's 17, and she's a right-winger. Her parents voted for Goldwater. So Orson and she are driving to Phoenix, Arizona and she says to him, "Let's go say hello to Senator Goldwater." Goldwater had just lost the national election three weeks earlier, and Orson tries to explain that a person doesn't just drop in unannounced on a Presidential candidate. But the girl, wearing a "Goldwater for President" sports shirt, prevails. They drive up to Goldwater's house, where I've often been, so I describe what it's like there.

TAE: And Barry Goldwater takes them into his ham radio studio, where he lets them listen to broadcasts from Radio Moscow.

BUCKLEY: Goldwater is able to hear the Soviets denouncing him. (laughs)

TAE: Did you ever visit Goldwater's radio studio?

BUCKLEY: Oh, yes. I was there two or three times. I was even in a ham radio station with him in the South Pole once. On that particular trip, a man who had a small radio station asked Goldwater if he wanted to come in and sample

Any conservative who's interesting has to be interested in many things. Music, art, stories, love.

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it, and he did. I went with him.

TAE: During the '50s, did you listen to Elvis Presley or Frank Sinatra?

BUCKLEY: I listened to Sinatra, of course. One can't *not* listen to Sinatra. But Elvis? No. I've heard a great deal of him over the last year and a half, and I like about 20 percent of it.

TAE: Does the kind of music a person prefers have anything to do with his political views?

BUCKLEY: I have to assume that it does, but I'm absolutely at sea in attempting correlations that are satisfactory to me. The iconoclasm and demanding rhythm of rock 'n' roll causes people to indulge primitive impulses. It's primitive to get up and scream and yell so loud that you can't hear. I don't understand it—but obviously many people do, because that's what's on the radio. Correlations have to exist, but how to deduce them from cause and effect, I'm incapable of doing.

TAE: In researching your book you traveled to Elvis's home "Graceland," one of the great American pop landmarks.

BUCKLEY: Jack Soden, the CEO of Elvis Presley Enterprises, took me through the house late one night because I wanted to see it as Elvis did. Going through the house, you feel as though Elvis could appear at any moment. But you also get this real sense of his self-indulgence. Every room is crammed with Elvis's impulse of the moment. There are his flashy jump suits and golden discs. There's the jungle room.

Soden told me that one year after Elvis died, people spontaneously began to accumulate on the street outside. He asked permission of Elvis's wife, Priscilla, to let these fans come in. Some 10,000 still show up every August, the month of his death, and they come with candles for a candlelight pilgrimage. There's no chewing-gum wrappers or popcorn—it's all very reverential. What's amazing is that even though Elvis became so overweight and unattractive, his impact has survived that grotesqueness.

TAE: Two Southern towns are featured in your novel: Camden, South Carolina and Memphis, Tennessee.

BUCKLEY: Camden is where I spent winters growing up, and in the book, it's where Orson's grandparents live. It's there, in 1956, that he turns on his grandfather's television set and sees Elvis. It moved him so much that the next day, he got on a bus to Columbia to buy Elvis's record. That kind of indenture took shape and stayed with him the rest of his life. Camden, though, isn't at all like Memphis, which was a natural conduit for Elvis's kind of music, which was almost a Pentecostal rock 'n' roll.

Memphis was a natural conduit for Elvis Presley's kind of music—which was almost a Pentecostal rock 'n' roll.

TAE: Many have said that *Elvis in the Morning* is one of your best books. One review called it a "small masterpiece." Critics have expressed surprise that "the cultivated Buckley could understand Presley's enormous visceral appeal," and readers have talked about how "tender," "gentle," and "sweet" the book is. Is the author of *McCarthy and His Enemies, Up From Liberalism,* and *The Redhunter* going soft on us?

BUCKLEY: I don't know how to answer that. I really came to like Elvis Presley. He was a pain about a lot of things, but I liked him despite that. Perhaps because so much of Elvis is considered disruptive, and I wasn't more critical of him, people think I'm going soft. But this is just a story.

It's nice to think that your books can imaginatively tell a story. *Sweet?* I've always distinguished between sentimental and sentiment, and I'm all in favor of sentiment.

TAE: For several years now, Paul Weyrich and some other conservative activists have argued in favor of retreating into parallel universes as a way of escaping degraded popular culture. They say we should stop trying so strenuously to change majority culture and instead enjoy this rich life that America allows us to live as a cultural and moral minority. Do your passionate detours into sailing, and novels such as this one, represent your partial retreat from political life into private passions?

BUCKLEY: Any conservative who's interesting has to be *interested* in many things. Music, art, stories, love—all those are important. To express those interests in books one writes strikes me as entirely normal. I've spent many hours on sailboats and I've written four books about sailing, but I don't think that has anything to do with conservatism. I suppose it would if those books reflected a complete indifference to the wonders of nature, but on the other hand, how could a conservative do that? A conservative must have concern for our nature, and marvel over it. It's incorrect to imagine that a conservative has to have interests limited exclusively to expressions of a political character.

TAE: Where's the next generation of the Buckley family headed politically?

BUCKLEY: Well, I have 40 nieces and nephews and none of them is a dissident in the sense of my protagonist Orson. There's no generational revolt in my family.

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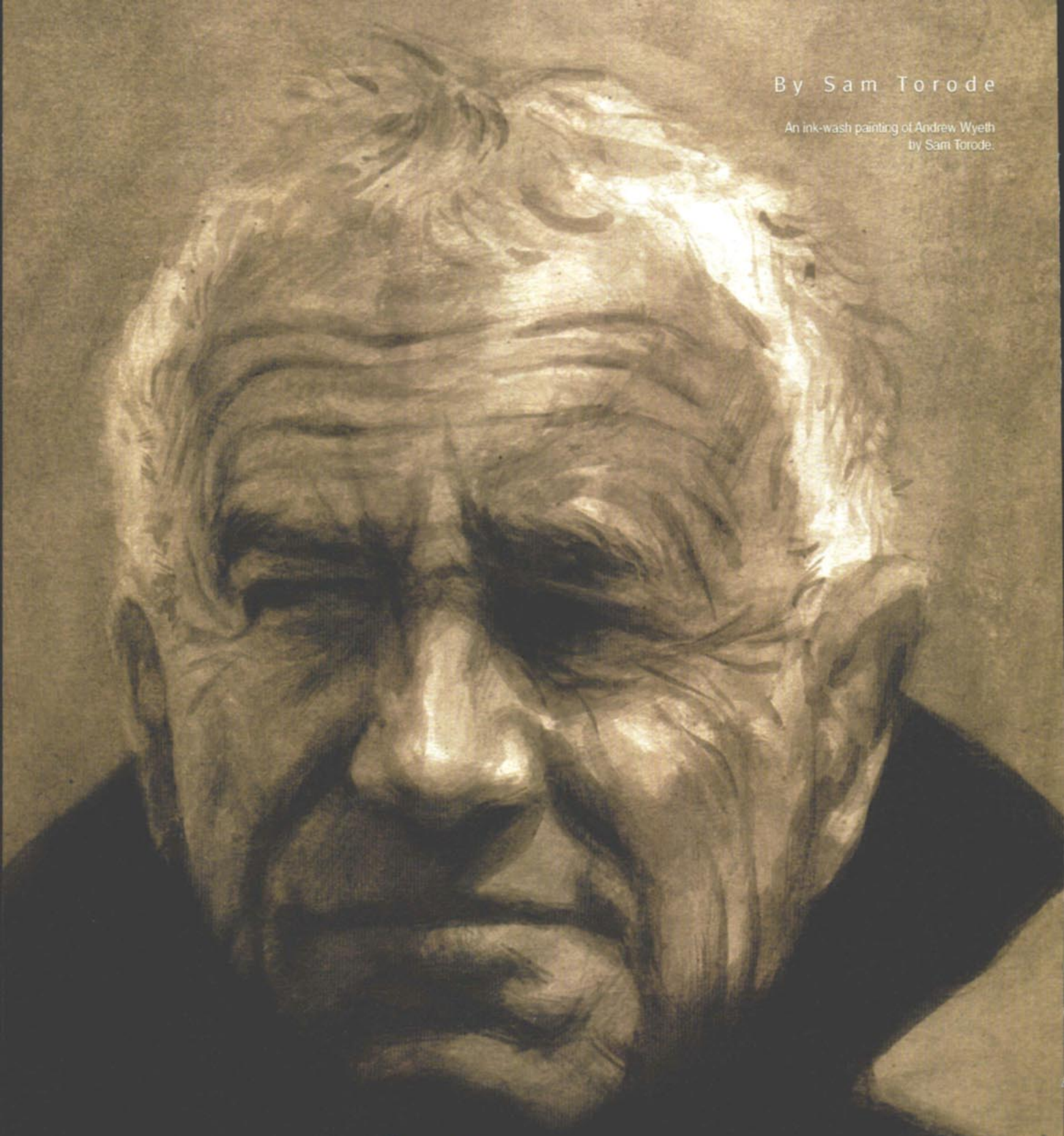

By Sam Torode

An ink-wash painting of Andrew Wyeth by Sam Torode.

Art as an Expression of Love

Andrew Wyeth's Homely Devotion

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Traveling Pennsylvania's Route 100, winding alongside the Brandywine River and passing by many stunning estate properties and colonial-style farmhouses, it is easy to miss the old converted schoolhouse just south of Chadds Ford. Hundreds drive past it each day, but few realize that from within this unassuming building has come some of the greatest art ever created in America. For over 60 years, it has served as Andrew Wyeth's studio.

One Sunday afternoon, a mutual friend brought me to the studio on a whim, to see if Andy (as he is known) was around. Above the studio door, a sign was posted to ward off unwanted visitors—I DO NOT SIGN AUTOGRAPHS. We had no appointment—Wyeth doesn't schedule his days by the clock or calendar. There was no guarantee he'd be in, my friend said, and even if he was, he might not answer, but it was worth a shot. I stood in front of the intimidating sign and hoped I did not look like an autograph hunter.

Our knock was answered by the voice of Helga Testorf, Wyeth's longtime model, now nurse and assistant. She called us into the kitchen area, where she sat on the floor, surrounded by a dozen glass jars filled with colored powders. Her hair was dyed blonde and she wore a white tank top and stretch pants. My friend asked about the jars. "They're herbs," she explained in her thick German accent. "*Healing* herbs. How do you think I keep Andy alive so long?"

"Will Andy be over today?" my friend asked.

"Yes, but I don't know when," Helga answered.

The kitchen was in disarray. Heaps of mail and newspapers covered the counters. Art books—hefty volumes on Dürer, Rembrandt, Brueghel, and others—were stacked on a bookshelf and on the floor. The air was heavy and sweet—no air conditioning—and flies buzzed around the sink. The scene brought to mind a comment of Wyeth's I had read: "I like to paint in places that are not too nice. That's why I like painting Helga. She's not in love with the neatness of life or things."

On the walls were photos of various members of the Wyeth clan and a pencil sketch of Andrew's wife, Betsy. A large detail from Botticelli's "Primavera" hung above the chairs Helga cleared off for us. On a closet door hung a poster for an exhibit of Russian Orthodox icons. Wyeth's connection to Botticelli, the master of egg tempera, was obvious. But I wondered what interest he had in icons—except that they too are painted in egg tempera, which, next to watercolor, is Wyeth's primary medium.

Egg tempera, far more difficult to master than oils or acrylics, has all but fallen out of use. A tempera painting must be woven, layer upon layer, using countless small strokes of pigment. Speaking of the creation of his best-known tempera, "Christina's World," Wyeth said, "I'm alone with a tempera for hours and hours. And the intensity builds and builds until it's not a flat surface to me, until the painting itself is a living object—and I live within the picture. I thought of Christina as existing in that miniature house.... I was building a real house—the clapboards and everything—each little sill on the window."

Most of the subjects for Wyeth's hundreds of paintings are taken from the square mile around his home, a place freighted with countless memories and emotions.

While we waited for Andy, Helga brewed some herbal tea and brought out a box of tea biscuits. The ornate box showed an engraving of Albrecht Dürer's house. Helga had ordered the box from Germany as a gift for Andy, she said, because he visited Dürer's home on his only trip to Europe. Despite Wyeth's interest in great art, he very rarely travels or visits museums. "After you travel you're never the same," he once said. "You get more erudite, you get more knowledge. I might lose something very important to my work—maybe innocence."

"By everyone from my first girlfriend to great art critics, I've been criticized for being too narrow. 'Andrew, it would help your work if you traveled abroad—you've got to broaden your outlook—you'd come back with a fresh eye.' If there's one thing that

Wyeth's paintings of Helga Testorf were collected in this 1991 book.

Writer and artist Sam Torode lived in Chester County, Pennsylvania from 1998 to 1999, where he studied the Wyeths and the Brandywine tradition.

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Sam Torode

Kuerner's Hill in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

really gets me going, it's the lack of belief today in what can be creatively American in an artist."

It would be hard to find more love of the "creatively American" in any other artist. Creativity was instilled in Andrew at an early age by his father (and only art instructor), N. C. Wyeth. One of the greatest American illustrators, N. C.'s exuberant paintings of such classic tales as *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Robin Hood*, *The Black Arrow*, and *The Last of the Mohicans* are etched in the minds of generations of readers. A bold, imposing figure possessed of a very sensitive spirit, N. C. stoked the imaginations of his children by regaling them with dramatic stories, introducing them to the best classical music, and taking them on excursions through the countryside.

At Christmas, N. C. would transform himself into "Old Kriss," the family version of Santa Claus. He mounted the roof, ringing bells, barking out orders to reindeer, and stamping his feet to wake the children. Finally, Old Kriss actually squeezed down through the chimney and into the "big room" to deliver the presents. Young Andrew was so shaken with delight and terror at this spectacle that, on at least one occasion, he wet his pants.

Above all, N. C. sought to immerse his children in beauty, wonder, and romance—the very qualities embodied in his illustrations. His efforts were not in vain. Andrew, Henriette, and Carolyn became painters; Ann, an accomplished musical composer (her "Christmas Fantasy" was premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra when she was only 18); and Nathaniel became an engineer with DuPont, developing among other things the technology for creating plastic soda pop bottles.

Andrew's boyhood home is just up the hill from his present-day studio. And just beyond the old house is the N. C. Wyeth studio, built in 1912 with the proceeds from N. C.'s *Treasure Island* illustrations. In his studio, N. C. kept a chest full of costumes for his models. Raiding the chest, the Wyeth children and their friends masqueraded as cowboys, Indians, soldiers, pirates, and princesses. Andrew loved to dress up as Robin Hood and lead his band of merry men through the surrounding forest. He was of frail health as a child, thus kept out of public school and informally tutored at home. "When I was a kid and the rest were going to school," he recounted, "I was getting educated wandering through cornfields and the woods."

The afternoons spent roaming the countryside, the magical and terrifying Christmases, the masquerading and role-playing with friends—they are all part of the essence of Wyeth's art. Most of the subjects for his hundreds of paintings are taken from a radius of less than a square mile around his home. Wyeth paints what he knows. A hill for him is not just a hill, but a place freighted with countless memories and emotions. "I don't love the Brandywine Valley because it's scenic, or because it's beautiful," he explained. "I love it the way you love your mother. I love it because I was born here."

One cannot paint as Wyeth does without an intimate know-

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ledge of a small plot of land and its inhabitants. An outsider is distracted by the mere surface or "big picture"—he might pull over to the side of the road to enjoy a scenic view, but he cannot truly know what he is looking at. The tourist does not know the local names of hills or streams, or the history that gives them significance.

Consider Kuerner's Hill, which Wyeth has sketched and painted hundreds of times. The first time I drove down Ring Road in Chadds Ford, I was shocked to suddenly find myself in the middle of an Andrew Wyeth painting. There was Kuerner's Hill—I recognized its particular slope and crown of pine trees. But it was no more spectacular than any other hill. Were it not for Wyeth's paintings, I certainly would not have given it a second look. What does Wyeth see in that ordinary hill? He has walked over and around it since his days of playing Robin Hood. But it was on October 19, 1945 that Kuerner's Hill became a focal point of Wyeth's life and art. On that day, N. C. and his grandson Newell were out for an afternoon drive, when they came to the railroad crossing at the foot of Kuerner's Hill. N. C.'s car stalled (or perhaps he was distracted, or suffered a heart attack—no one knows for sure). The car was struck by an oncoming train—N. C. and little Newell were killed instantly.

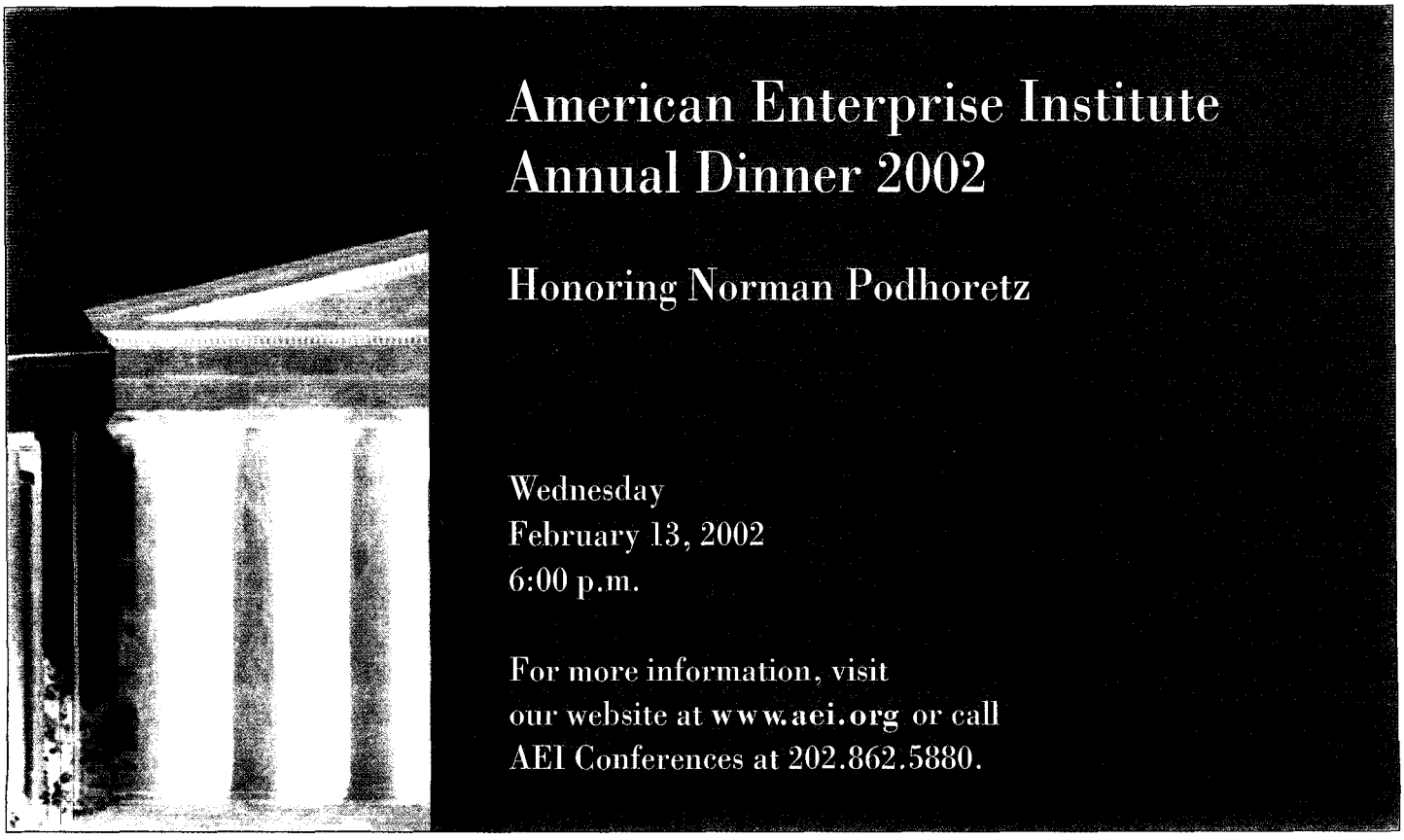
Andrew's first major painting after his father's death, "Winter 1946," shows a boy running down Kuerner's Hill. "I was sick I'd never painted [my father]. The hill finally became a portrait of him. I spent the whole winter on that painting—it was just the one way I could free this horrible feeling that was in me—and yet there was great excitement.

"When he died, I was just a clever watercolorist—lots of swish and swash. When he died, well, now I was really on the spot and had this terrific urge to prove that what he started in me was not in vain—to really do something serious and not play around with it, doing caricatures of nature. I had a vast gloomy feeling. Fortunately, I had always had this great emotion toward the landscape and so, with his death . . . the landscape took on a meaning—the quality of him."

"The so-called common man instinctively knows what's worthy in art and what to like."
—*Andrew Wyeth*

After N. C.'s death, Chadds Ford meant more than ever to Andrew, and he has never left it. (Though, following a tradition begun by N. C., he spends most summers painting near Port Clyde, Maine.) Staying close to his native home, Wyeth has grown increasingly aware of the passage of time and the rhythms of life, death, and rebirth. "I'm very conscious of the ephemeral nature of the world. There are cycles. Things pass. They do not hold still. My father's death did that to me."

That May afternoon as we waited in the kitchen, a weathered blue pick-up truck finally ambled up the drive. Andy hopped out and made his way into the studio. We shook hands—he was happy to see his old friend and apparently pleased to meet his young companion. At 82 years, Wyeth was



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"Chicken Wire" by Andrew Wyeth, 1952, graphite on paper.

somewhat slowed by age, his face ruddy and weathered, capped by silver hair. But his clear, high voice and impish smile were welcoming, and when he spoke his blue eyes flashed with child-like restlessness. He wore a tweed jacket over his white turtleneck shirt, and black thermal pants.

Wyeth's studio houses a number of curious artifacts, and as he showed me around the large room (once the schoolroom), Andy relished pointing out each item and telling its story. Several military uniforms were displayed in glass cases—one from the Franco-Prussian War, another belonged to a Union general in the American Civil War. The uniforms reminded me of the costumes in N.

"Spring Beauty" by Andrew Wyeth, 1943, watercolor.

C.'s studio, and Andrew's childhood days of dressing up.

Andy pointed to a soldier's helmet resting atop a cabinet: "That was Karl Kuerner's helmet in the First World War. He painted a horseshoe on it for luck. And on the back he painted an eye—so he could see behind his head." Near the end of his life, Karl, stricken with cancer, posed for Wyeth in that very helmet. In "The German" (1975)—Kuerner immigrated to the U.S. in 1923—Karl stares out with icy eyes into a cold and brutal winter landscape. It is one of Wyeth's most haunting portraits.

Wyeth has always been fascinated by military history. As a boy, his collection of toy soldiers fired his imagination, inspiring many of his first paintings. "My earlier things," he told Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, "were landscapes, hills near our house, romantic images of medieval castles, knights in armor, a lot of drawings of doughboys, soldiers of the First World War, because I was just fascinated by a collection of lead soldiers I had of that period."

Today, Wyeth's soldiers still march in procession along the bookshelves and windowsills in the main room of the studio. "These are the same toy soldiers I played with as a boy," he proudly told me as we stood admiring them. They were gifts from his father.

Courtesy of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery

Andrew Wyeth told me how, in the 1950s, he traveled to New York for the opening of an exhibit that included his own work and that of the great realist Edward Hopper, alongside a myriad of large abstract paintings that had no discernible subject at all. It was there, said Wyeth, that he met Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, the fathers of Abstract Expressionism, who dominated the art scene of the time. The reaction he had to the trendy modernists is illuminating. "They were the conservatives," Wyeth said of Pollock and de Kooning. "They were the establishment. *We* were the radicals."

I asked Wyeth specifically what he thought of Pollock, who created his vibrant "action paintings" by laying canvases on the floor and splattering them with paint straight out of the can. He spoke fondly of the man. "He was a wonderful, exuberant personality. Flamboyant—just like his paintings." Wyeth, I learned, is not a partisan of any "ism"—he does not dismiss any artist out of hand because of his style.

The same cannot be said of Wyeth's critics. By the 1960s, Abstract Expressionism and the New York style were entrenched dogma. Pop Art and Minimalism soon followed. Wyeth, who did not fit in, became a lightning rod for criticism. Wyeth is still ignored by most historians of twentieth-century art, except for those, like *Time* magazine art critic Robert Hughes, who mention Wyeth only to defame his work. (Hughes wrote in his influential survey of modern art, *The Shock of the New*, that Wyeth's "ridiculously over-promoted" nudes "look like pious deodorant ads.")

Courtesy of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery

Rather than engaging his art on its own terms, elitist critics simply dismiss Wyeth. "He's just an illustrator," sneered Hilton Kramer of *The New Criterion*. "Wyeth's paintings have nothing to do with serious artistic expression." In Kramer's vocabulary, "artists" are an anointed few, set apart from the rest of humanity. Wyeth has no use for such pretension. He doesn't see art as sacred—in fact, he has been known to burn his own preliminary sketches by the barrelful, when they might sell for thousands of dollars apiece. And in the foreword to a recent book by Thomas Hoving, Wyeth reasserted his confidence in the common people: "The so-called common man instinctively knows what's worthy in art and what to like and just needs a little coaxing to express it and be confident with it."

Viewing Wyeth's work in the Brandywine River Museum, I have sometimes heard museumgoers comment on Wyeth's realism. "Look at the detail on that—it looks just like a photograph!" But the subtle allure of Wyeth's realism is that he goes far beyond what can be done with a camera. He transcends the mere surface to capture the spirit of his subject, often by distortion, abstraction, simplifying visual forms, and adding a touch of the surreal.

A good example is Wyeth's large tempera painting "The Virgin" (1969). A powerful piece, it, like any great work of art, cannot be explained, only experienced. "The Virgin" depicts a young, nude woman standing unselfconsciously in a dark barn, her head turned toward a crack in the door, through which a

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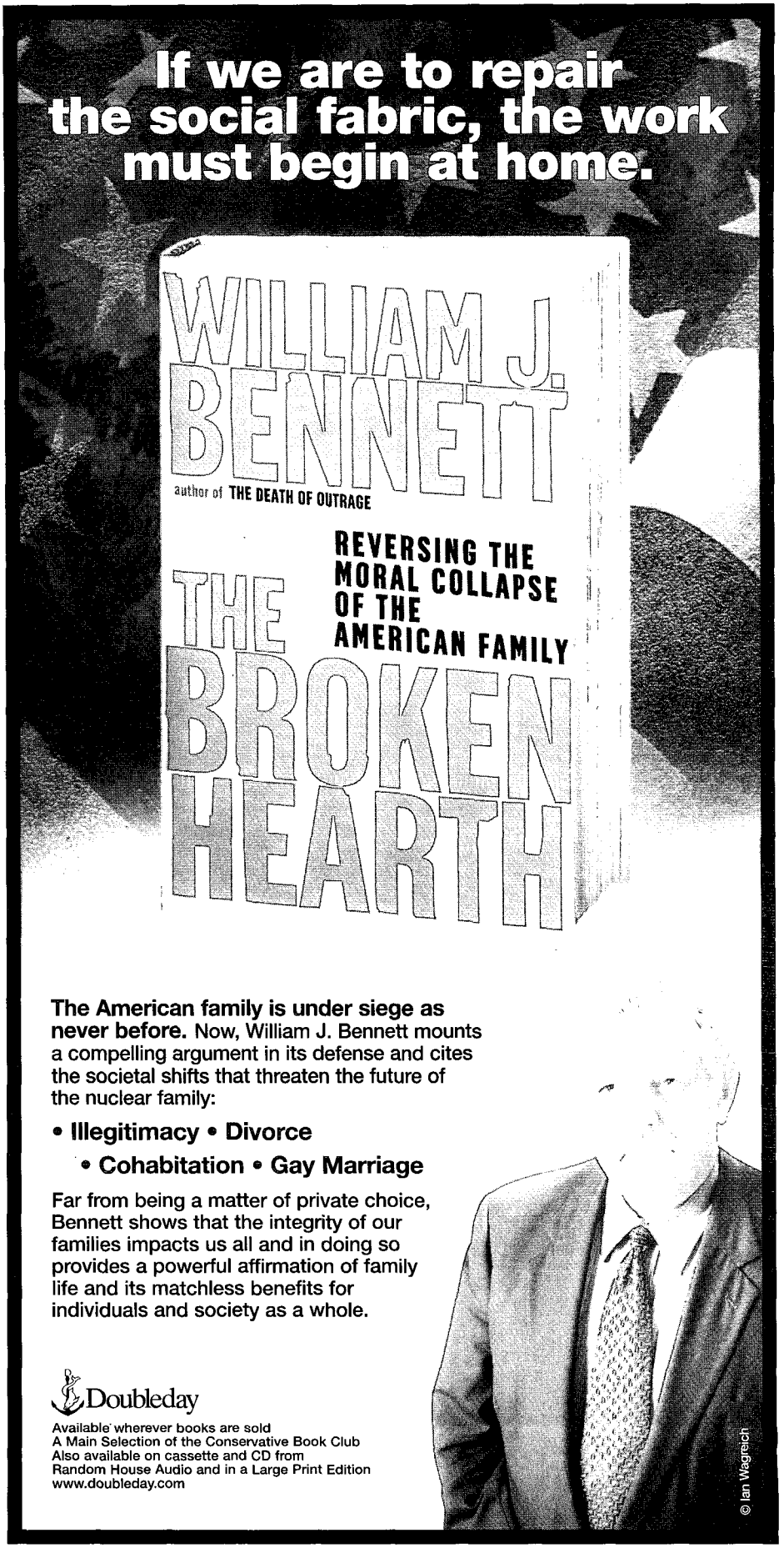
shaft of golden light falls across her face and shoulder and catches her hair. The pose itself could not be exactly replicated on film—the perspective of the barn floor has been slightly tilted so that we are looking down at the woman's feet but up at her head, creating a feeling of monumental stature. Within this painting Wyeth subtly communicates an entire world of experiences—the smells of the barn, the passage of time, the texture of hair and skin, the character of a rugged farm girl. "Here's a girl who only had outside privies," Wyeth told Thomas Hoving, "who had slept all her life in a room on a mattress where the snow could drift across it." That knowledge informed the painting, suffusing "The Virgin" with a quiet dignity that goes far beyond a superficial portrait of a pretty girl. Wyeth shows us not just the body but something of the soul.

"I couldn't get any of this feeling," Wyeth once said, "without a very strong connection for a place. Really, I think one's art goes only as far and as deep as your love goes. I don't paint these hills around Chadds Ford because they're better than the hills somewhere else. It's that I was born here, lived here—things have a meaning for me." In a modern America of rootlessness and continual transition, Andrew Wyeth's life and art have remained grounded in the land and people nearest to him. He has remained close to the sources of his inspiration; that is why, even after seven decades, his creative output shows no signs of slowing down or drying up.

In Andrew Wyeth's artistic vision, the particular is made universal. "You don't have to paint tanks and guns to capture war," he has said. "You should be able to paint it in a dead leaf falling from a tree in autumn." In painting a barren hill, Wyeth evokes longing and sadness. In painting his neighbors, he uncovers our common human nature. Because of Wyeth's art, the distinct places and people of a little village called Chadds Ford resonate with observers across the world. And that is why his work will endure.



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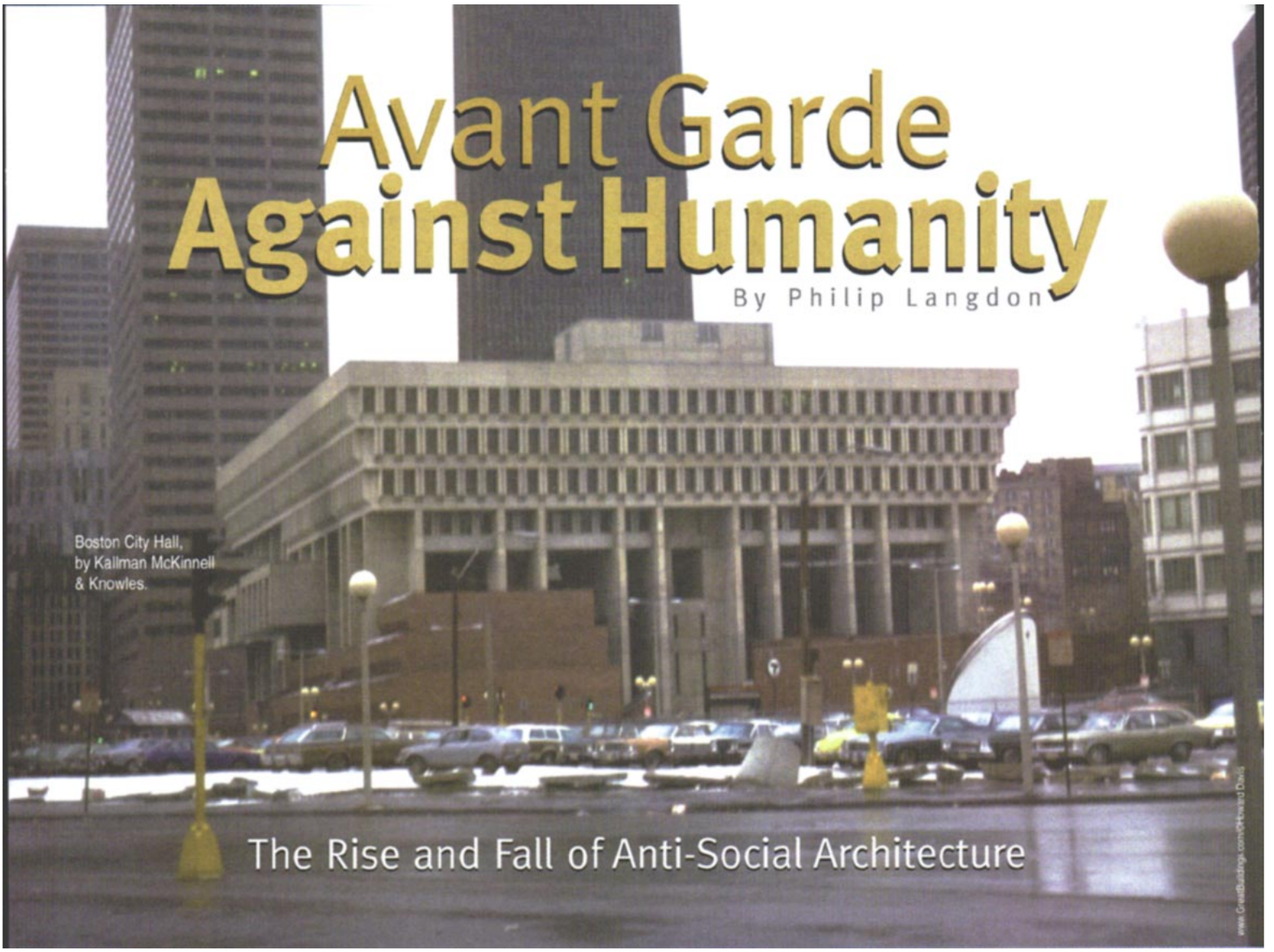

Avant Garde Against Humanity

By Philip Langdon

Boston City Hall, by Kallman McKinnell & Knowles.

The Rise and Fall of Anti-Social Architecture

The 1960s were a heady time for architects—the last decade in which they were treated like demigods—and the American landscape still has the scars to show for it: the belligerent monolith of Boston City Hall, the regimented grandiosity of Nelson Rockefeller's Albany Mall, and hundreds of damaged campuses, from Fredonia State (a casualty of I. M. Pei) to Yale (where Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building continues to frustrate occupants nearly 40 years after its concrete dried). Innumerable parts of our land suffer today from what was inflicted on them by architects during the heyday of Modernism.

Unfortunately, the spirit of the '60s is returning in building design; the tragedy of architectural arrogance is now being replayed as farce. Across North America, a rash of anti-social architecture is erupting. Public participation in design decision-making has blocked some of the worst ideas, but alienating buildings are rising in significant numbers. Indeed, advocates of "progressive" architecture proclaim many as instant landmarks, and portray their designers as stars.

An egregious example appeared in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the spring of 2000. Harvard University decided the best candidate to design a building on Mount Auburn Street in Harvard Square would be an avant-garde Viennese architect named Hans Hollein, winner of the much-ballyhooed Pritzker Prize (an award yet to be given to any architect working in a strongly traditional vein). The Boston beloved for its architecture with historical roots—Faneuil Hall, the Old State House, Beacon Hill, the Back Bay, the neo-Georgian delights of Harvard—thus became the site for an artistic experiment that showed no respect for its preceding, neighboring structures.

Hollein proposed a building with a wavy, sloping glass front and a metal mesh stretched across most of the facade. This amounted to a slap in the face of Mount Auburn Street, where beautiful Georgian and Regency Revival buildings form a cohesive, remarkably agreeable backdrop for daily life. Whereas the gracious existing buildings, mainly red brick with white trim, say "New England," the five-story building designed by Hollein with

TAE *contributing writer Philip Langdon is author of numerous books on architecture and design, including* A Better Place to Live: Reshaping the American Suburb.

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Bruner/Cott Associates of Cambridge was to be clad in bronze panels—saying "anyplace." The old buildings feature vertical windows based on the proportions of the upright human body; Hollein's new building was to have "ribbon windows"—horizontal glazing at odds with the neighbors and unrealted to human scale.

I asked Leland Cott, Hollein's local collaborator, about the design. His answers reveal the arbitrariness of today's avant-garde preoccupations and hint at why so many buildings by today's cutting-edge architects are mystifying or maddening to the public. Why does it make sense to stretch a mesh of brass and stainless steel across the facade? The mesh, Cott answered, is "a way of redefining the building surface." It asks, "Where on the face of a building does the surface really begin?" *Au courant* architects, especially European ones, *love* mesh. They see it as the perfect wrapper for an up-to-the-minute structure.

They arrived at this point by a convoluted route: In the 1940s and '50s, the Holy Grail of Modern architecture was the simple glass box. Modernists believed the elimination of applied ornament was the key to producing buildings as "honest" as an Eagle Scout. But as people quickly got bored with oversimplified glass boxes, some of the Modernists decided that decoration was okay after all—as long as it wasn't (horror of horrors) traditional. Edward Durell Stone, designer of New York City's Museum of Modern Art, placed masonry sun screens on building exteriors. Other Modernists tried different means of giving elaboration to buildings that, owing to early Modernism's puritanical ideology, had been stripped of pleasing detail.

In the last several years, avant-garde designers have decided the answer to boredom is mesh. If women's legs are admired in mesh stockings, wouldn't buildings look alluring in fashionable industrial mesh? "It's a kind of sexiness of the half-revealed; that's what's at work there," says Patrick Pinnell, an architect who taught at Yale for many years. This intellectual conceit wouldn't matter, except that architects who feel compelled to go with the latest craze are not likely to create satisfying, lasting environments.

Faddish buildings often ignore ordinary people's concerns and dishonor the neighborhoods in which they are built. When asked about the Cambridge building's intrusion on its graceful surroundings, Cott declared that the proposed building was "contextual" because it was to rise about the same height as nearby buildings and was to have a courtyard that would frame a view of a traditional building nearby. Never mind that its shape and materials were totally out of place.

This brings us to a second problem with contemporary architecture: faulty thinking about what fits where. "Contextualism" emerged in the 1970s as part of a reaction by many people, including historic preservationists, against Modern buildings that failed to complement their surroundings and form congenial settings for daily life. Under pressure from a public forced to live with these creations, designers began trying harder to relate new buildings to the old. The architects who endorsed contextualism agreed that a chief responsibility of designers is the creating of cohesive *places* that help people feel at home in a world constantly subjected to change.

Contextualism was never universally embraced, however, and today some of the most highly publicized architects rebel against it. Many avant-garde architects stretch the notion of context like a rubber band, trying to make it fit whatever they want. They may adjust some element of their design—such as the building's height—in deference to the surroundings, while insisting on imposing a jarring new aesthetic contemptuous of the existing neighborhood, and unconcerned with the emotions and ideas of the human beings who live and work there.

> The windows of the apartments are so short (to fit the architect's grunge aesthetic) that residents must hunch down when they want to look outside.

New York Times architecture critic Herbert Muschamp has been a godsend for designers who want to disregard public standards of architectural behavior. From his influential pulpit at the *Times*, Muschamp has preached that "contextualism" doesn't mean what most people understand it to mean: design that is strongly linked to, and supportive of, its immediate physical surroundings. To Muschamp, what matters most is the "cultural context," which can be interpreted so liberally that strong-willed architects end up taking us wherever they choose.

Novel buildings of cutting-edge architects are often trumpeted as "bold" and "challenging," the assumption being that the architect, less repressed than the rest of us, has a truer philosophical grip on life. By this reasoning, resistance from the public only confirms that the artist-architect is ahead of everybody else. In practice, an architect who pictures himself as a lone hero throwing off society's oppressions will often end up damaging slowly evolved places beloved by the public.

In Cambridge, local citizens did not remain silent about Hollein's plan to mutilate their street. Ronald Lee Fleming, pres-

Bruner/Cott

Design proposed by Hans Hollein for a building to be located in historic Harvard Square.

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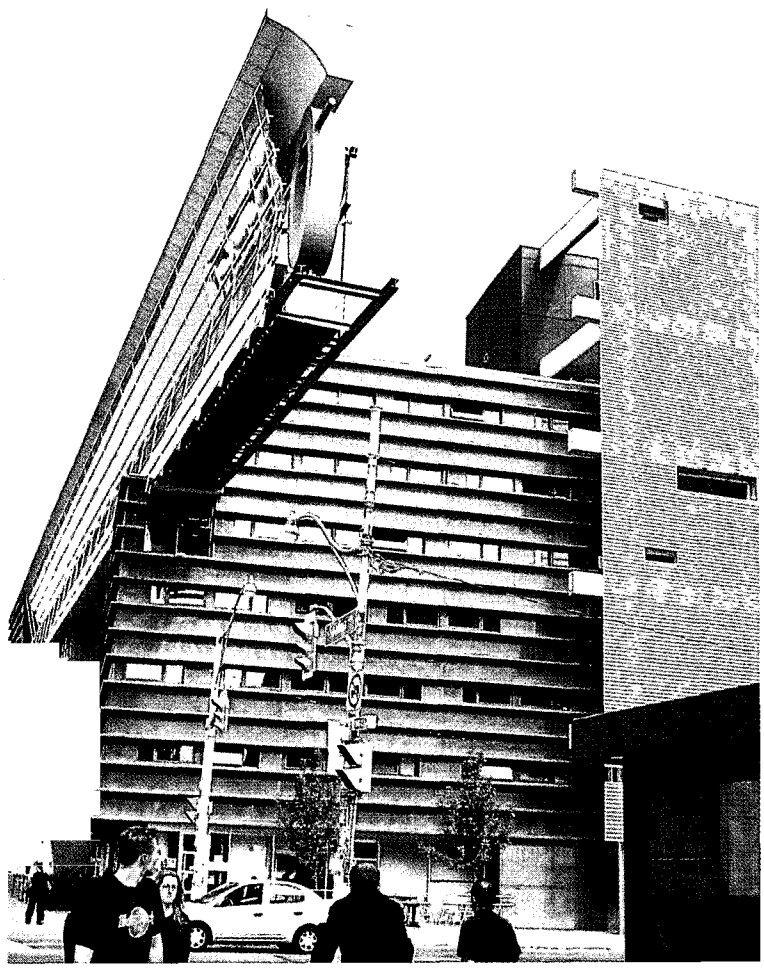
Some buildings feel powerful and grand when you're alone in them. Eisenman's just feel deserted and dingy.

ident of the Townscape Institute, declared Hollein's design "a meshed thumb projecting into the eye of a street which has collected values over time." Eventually, the Cambridge Historical Commission ruled the design out of place and prevented it from being built. So there will be no meshed thumb stabbing Harvard Square in the eye—despite Harvard and its superstar architect.



Philip Langdon

The University of Toronto's Graduate House, by Thom Mayne, Morphosis.

Toronto has not been so lucky. Like Harvard, the University of Toronto was eager to get a "hot" avant-garde architect for its latest building project, and found one in Morphosis, one of the few dozen firms worldwide that Muschamp plugs in his *Times* columns. To house 433 graduate students in downtown Toronto, Morphosis, a Santa Monica-based firm that practices its own version of the meshed thumb, designed a building with several stories of menacing-looking black concrete. The windows that peer from that sinister facade onto busy Spadina Avenue are short and deeply recessed into the ribbed surface, as if to obscure any evidence of human habitation. The effect, *Globe & Mail* critic Lisa Rochon wrote after Graduate House was completed, is of "a defensive bunker from another country's war zone."

From the top of the concrete facade rises what Thom Mayne, Morphosis' Harvard-trained principal, calls a "human cornice"—a glass-walled corridor that proclaims "UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO" in letters two stories high. It is a rudely blaring way to advertise the school, especially in a city as well-mannered as Toronto. The glaring sign does not stop at the building edge but extends over a cross-street, a giant "O" hanging above pedestrians and motorists. Nearby residents responded with nervousness, fearing the cantilevered sign might fall or drop chunks of ice on them. University officials said those concerns were unfounded, and let Mayne have his way. But surely a responsible architect would care about what his building does to people's emotions.

When I visited Graduate House, it had been in operation for about a year, and its concrete was already streaked and chalky, the blackness turning muddy. The windows of the apartments on Spadina Avenue are so short (to fit the architect's grunge aesthetic) that residents must hunch down when they want to look out of them. Walls that face east or south are partly covered with a perforated aluminum screen, also interfering with sunlight and views. When questioned, architect Mayne lamely offered that students use their apartments mostly for studying on computers, "so there's a requirement for lower lighting"—this in a city notorious for gray winter skies.

The city required that the building have a courtyard in its center. It is the gloomiest courtyard I've seen in a long time. Its focal point is a rusting modern sculpture—an abstract silhouette of a moose—which rises from a shallow, dirty pool. The day I visited, a newspaper circular, a beer bottle, a tennis ball, and other detritus floated in the scummy pool. The building manager apologized by saying the courtyard was due for its routine cleaning the following week. Having seen a number of cutting-edge buildings in not very good condition over the years, I've come to the conclusion that such neglect is usually a sign of something other than an inadequate maintenance schedule. The underlying problem is that people do not take care of buildings they sense are hostile. And this building definitely has an attitude problem. On the bright and lovely September day I visited, not a single soul ventured into the sullen courtyard.

I e-mailed Morphosis a request for a description of the design intentions. In reply came a statement saying that Morphosis has "a long-standing interest in challenging and transgressing the boundaries between public and private." "Transgressing the boundaries" is of course a favorite piece of radical jargon used in many fields today, intended to announce that "we're tough; no bourgeois niceties for us." This is laughably pretentious stuff, especially when applied to something as straightforward (and humane) as a university dorm.

The question is why universities, which historically have aspired to be centers of enlightenment, are now such suckers for architecture bristling with covert or overt hostility. Michael Marrus, dean of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies, defends Graduate House and its architects by explaining that "like the university itself, architecture should be about ideas and experimentation." "From an

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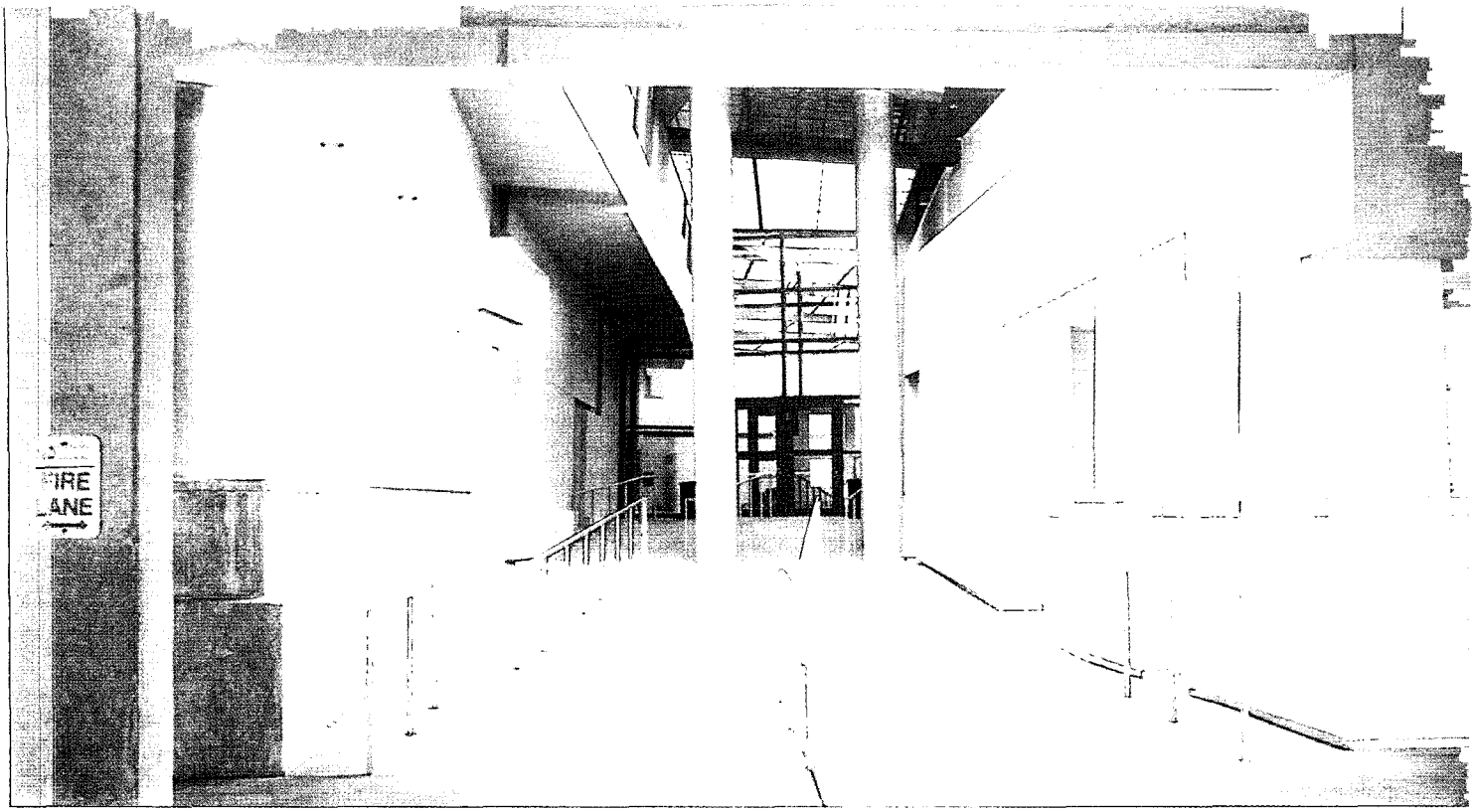

Philip Langdon

Entrance to the University of Cincinnati's Aronoff Center, by Peter Eisenman.

architectural and urbanistic point of view," he claims, "Graduate House is an intensely contemporary and progressive work."

This begs the question of what sort of "experiment" Morphosis and other avant-garde architects are conducting. A genuine experiment is a carefully structured event or process designed to uncover truth and falsity, success and failure, in the process adding to civilization's store of useful knowledge. Graduate House is nothing of the sort. It is an aesthetic dare of a rather adolescent sort. And if the building turns out to be a depressing blot on the city, it's not the architect who pays. The price is paid by the occupants, neighbors, and public; they are the unlucky guinea pigs sacrificed for art-world pretensions.

Avant-garde architects get to reap acclaim, awards, and future commissions virtually regardless of their buildings' failings. Boston City Hall is probably the most detested building in all of Boston today, yet it received an Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1969 and set its previously obscure architects, Kallmann, McKinnell & Knowles, on the path to professional success. Critics, design magazines, and award programs generally fawn over radical designs. "Hats off to the architects for stirring up the right kind of trouble from time to time," wrote the *Globe & Mail*'s Rochon right after she'd detailed Graduate House's serious flaws. "There's nothing wrong with jolting people awake with a cattle prod."

The veneration of "star" architects is often carried to extremes. Consider the case of the University of Cincinnati, where president Joseph Steger and architecture dean Jay Chatterjee pushed through a "signature architect" program aimed at commissioning renowned architects to design new buildings for their jumbled and undistinguished campus. Their first step was to hire avant-garde New York architect Peter Eisenman to design the Aronoff Center for Design and Art.

Eisenman hadn't built much at the time, but he was a master of one of the great tricks used by not terribly skillful architects to advance their careers: the prolific spinning of theory—the more complicated and abstruse the better. In the late 1980s, Eisenman was a proponent of "deconstruction," an approach based on the idea that there are no fixed meanings. Chatterjee wanted Eisenman to design a building that would "create a stir and draw attention to the university (something very much desired by the administrators trying to market the school)," according to Paul Bennett, author of a campus guidebook. The school's self-promotion strategy, the architect's self-absorbed design, and the press's hunger for novelty eventually joined to generate a burst of publicity in papers like the *Washington Post, USA Today,* and the *New York Times* for a university most people had never heard of before.

But the building is dreadful. It stands partly embedded in the top of a hill, sections of it jutting out at different angles. The windows are awkward trapezoids. Students have complained of cave-like classrooms and tortuous circulation. The entrance is hard to find, and when I did discover it—in the glum shadow of an adjoining parking garage—I continued to think this couldn't be it; the main entrance must be somewhere else. The exterior is clad in flimsy imitation stucco panels because Eisenman's many odd projections and diagonals were expensive to build, forcing the school to resort to cheap materials. That is a not uncommon trade-off in avant-garde design.

After climbing an unmarked staircase, I found a plaza, intended to serve as a pleasant gathering place, just as cheerless as the Morphosis courtyard in Toronto. A long concrete bench sat with flaking paint, leaving a discolored surface only someone wearing dirt-colored clothing would be willing to sit on. Less than five years after its dedication ceremony, the building showed numerous signs of deterioration. In areas that could be punched by hands or kicked by feet, the fake stucco had started to chip off, revealing plastic mesh and little foam pellets beneath. Walls were

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scuffed and stained. Blackened wads of chewing gum were pressed into the concrete floor. Cigarette butts lodged in the floor joints, and stickers from supermarket products stuck to various metal surfaces. The pushbutton for handicapped access bore a Bel Gioioso sticker reading, "One of the truly great cheeses of the world." Very appropriate for a surpassingly cheesy structure.

Some buildings feel powerful and grand when you're alone in them. Eisenman's just feels deserted and dingy. Now that the Aronoff Center's surfaces have started to erode, its arbitrary geometry of angles and grids cannot save the building from shabbiness. This rapid deterioration is virtually an Eisenman trademark. Another of his buildings, the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University, praised by Muschamp and other critics, has had problems with leakage, condensation, poor temperature and humidity control, excessive light levels, and abnormally high maintenance costs. Indeed, it is failing in so many respects that the university has had to undertake a $7 million renovation of the barely 12-year-old building.

Buildings that lack sympathy for their users end up looking bad no matter how durable their materials. Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale, constructed of hammered concrete in the early '60s, when avant-garde architects were experimenting in a style called "brutalism," is absolutely dismal in parts of its interior. The stairwells feel like a movie set for *Escape from New York*. Utility conduits snake crudely over surfaces. The most basic function of a building—keeping foul weather out—is only half-performed. I've visited the building often since 1982, and for as long as I can remember cold air has rushed in every winter through a two-inch gap beneath one of the stairwell doors. Millions of BTUs have been wasted. Rudolph's is a truly anti-social building, and its users simply will not be bothered to maintain it. The problem isn't money, it is the building's arrogance, which registers in people's psyches and weakens their commitment to keeping the structure in good order.

There are, of course, some good avant-garde buildings, though most have flaws that could have been avoided had the architects been less insistent on diverging from tradition. One of the University of Cincinnati's other "signature" architects, Michael Graves, designed what has turned out to be the campus's new landmark, the fascinating Engineering Research Building. It has the combination of sober monumentality and well-crafted intimate detailing—in wood, tile, and brick—that make many traditional buildings appealing. At the same time, it is highly original, with an enigmatic curved brown top and four oversized vent stacks rising from the laboratories through the roof that create an unforgettable silhouette. Graves succeeds where others fail, in part because he is not afraid to draw inspiration from pre-Modern architecture.

Any sane approach to architecture will acknowledge the value of learning from centuries of building experience. In his 1980 book *Complicity and Conviction: Steps Toward an Architecture of Convention*, Bill Hubbard of MIT argues that architecture

Modern Architecture's **Nasty Authoritarianism**

By Frank Buckley

When I was a boy and saw pictures of different cities, I could tell at a glance which country they were from. Today one cannot. Every city is filled with box after ugly box, each one the same, like products of some dreary factory. Stark designs originally conceived by 1920s Marxists for worker housing became the official architecture of Western capitalism, after bankers, lawyers, and accountants decided to become cutting edge.

A 1947 photo of Le Corbusier.

AP/World Wide Photo

The leading Modern architect Le Corbusier actually called his houses "machines for living"—with the accent on the first word. There was little concern for comfort or beauty, and none for the client's wishes. (Remember Ayn Rand's Howard Roark, who blew up the apartment building he designed because the client had the temerity to want—balconies!) What mattered was not people but fidelity to a theory. People could always be reshaped. Le Corbusier, for instance, believed that families should be broken up and society reassembled into phalanxes of several hundred people each. Hence the large buildings, the small apartments, and the oversized common areas to foster communard solidarity.

Le Corbusier's "Radiant City" was skyscraper after skyscraper—one for the city hall (and all its urban planners), another for the office workers, others for universities and museums. Everyone would live in high-rise apartments, separated by vast empty spaces to keep population densities down. It is a short step away from Albert Speer's plans for Germania, the proposed new Nazi capital. During his final weeks in the bunker, Hitler pored over Speer's plans, daydreaming about his legacy—the three-mile concourse anchored by the People's Hall, a vast dome into which three St. Paul's cathedrals would fit. National Socialism writ in stone and concrete. During the Soviet Union's mass starvation and show trials, Le Corbusier had eagerly designed his Palace of Soviets for Stalin. He flirted with Fascist politics, and in 1941 courted Marshal Pétain in a vain quest to build his megalomaniacal cities for Vichy. Somehow, this was not held against him after the war.

Mies van der Rohe, the other pioneer of Modernist architecture, likewise shook off an unsavory history after 1945. When Hitler assumed the powers as head of state and commander of the armed

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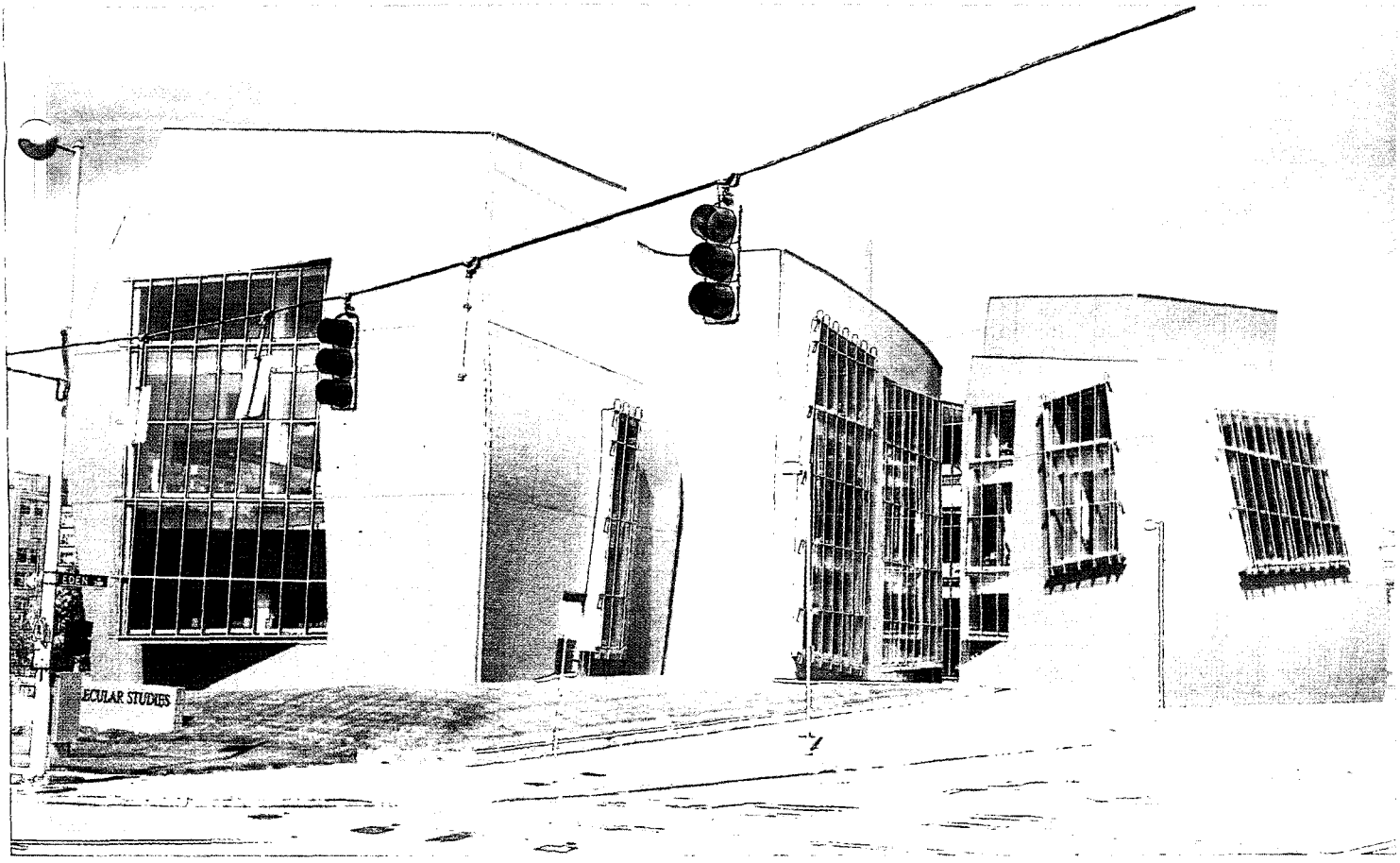

Philip Langdon

The Vontz Center for Molecular Studies, by Frank Gehry.

forces in 1934, van der Rohe was one of the artists who signed a public declaration that read in part: "we believe in this Führer, who has fulfilled our fervent wish for unity; We trust his work, which asks sacrifice… [We] belong to the Führer's followers."

When it came to design, there was not a great deal of difference between the Modernist buildings constructed for the Soviets and the Nazis (or those built in America, for that matter). All were unadorned structures of monumental size and straight lines. They communicated that the state and its architects were everything, the individual nothing.

A visitor to the Paris Exhibition of 1937 would have been hard-pressed to tell the German and Soviet Pavilions apart as they gloomily faced each other across the Palais Chaillot. From the outside, only the swastika and hammer-and-sickle told the tourist which brand of inhumanity the building represented. Years later, with his past safely forgotten, when he became the official architect of Modernism, van der Rohe's taste for authoritarianism remained quite visible. In his Seagram office tower in New York City, he insisted that the blinds could only be fully open, fully shut, or precisely half-closed. But the stubborn tenants insisted on marring the building's symmetry.

The Modernist vision of machine cities made central planners drool. But how to get rid of all those busy little privately owned, traditionally styled buildings that were in the way? Private developers lacked the planner's vision. Therefore it became necessary to enlist the aid of enlightened technocratic politicians, such as Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley Sr.

Mayors and other political rulers had two inestimable advantages over private developers. They had access to Other People's Money (taxpayer funds); better still, they didn't have to get anyone's consent before they tore down an old building and filled a new one with tenants. They could expropriate land using eminent domain powers, and populate their new buildings with welfare recipients who had no say in the matter. They did all this with the blessing of the most respected urbanists.

We all know what happened next. The planners took neighborhoods that worked, called them slums, and had them torn down to replace them with projects that quickly became violent, drug-infested, hellholes. The designs and central plans of the Modernists turned out to be harshly inhumane. Eventually, some of the worst projects, like St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe, were blasted to bits with dynamite. It wasn't that they were structurally unsound. It was that, so far as buildings might have moral qualities, they were evil.

What cities need, we have learned the hard way, is not egotistic designers and heavy-handed planners. Cities need chaos, not planning. Order will emerge—not the artificial and deadly order of the planners, but the spontaneous order of real people coordinating their activities around each other. Private developers could never build Germania or Pruitt-Igoe; only planners could.

Frank Buckley is a professor at George Mason University. This is adapted from his upcoming book, The Morality of Laughter.

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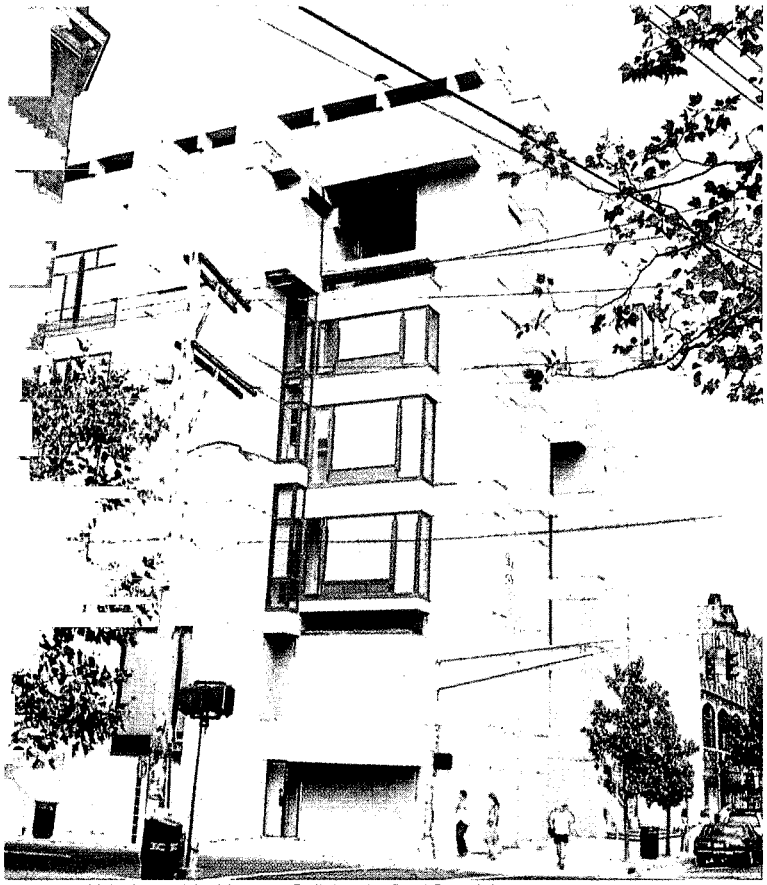

Yale Art and Architecture Building, by Paul Rudolph.

Philip Langdon

should proceed much as the law does, upholding forms that have gained acceptance over time, and expanding or diverging from those forms cautiously as new conditions warrant. "If you practice law, or if you were to practice architecture in this lawlike way, you couldn't escape the realization that your work exists at the sufferance of the people," Hubbard observes. A new building, Hubbard writes, should call up memories of buildings that its viewers already know. This helps ensure that the new building will be acceptable and meaningful for its users and the public.

Such guidelines do not rule out innovation. They only require that the innovation have sufficient justification—that it not be a whim. Hubbard suggests we recognize what the law remarkably accomplishes: It maintains the public's loyalty, yet allows the jurists to break new ground when the situation demands. "The judges made their opinions plausible by showing how they submitted to the wisdom of their predecessors," Hubbard says, "but they made their opinions convincing by showing how they exceeded their predecessors."

The encouraging countertrend in architecture today is that many designers outside the avant-garde are conscientiously learning from the accumulation of experience with buildings and spaces. Since the 1980s, "new urbanists" such as the Miami architect-planners Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk have meticulously studied past patterns of buildings, streets, and public spaces and applied the lessons to many projects across North America and overseas. A team led by Morten Jensen at Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz Architects in San Francisco is doing extensive research on the evolution of precedents in retail structures, "looking at how awnings, signage, and storefront design have evolved over the centuries in northern Europe, southern Europe, and the U.S." The findings have been used to design inventive, well-received retail centers in Europe and will likely be

In Defense of Traditional Architecture

By Andres Duany

In an article published not too long ago, prominent architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, an advocate of austere, abstract, undecorated, fashionably minimalist Modernism, looked at a photograph of some new townhouses in Washington and dismissed them out of hand. She abhorred the fact that they "copied" others nearby.

One very good reason for architectural "copying" may be that a designer is modest enough to realize that a good copy is better than a bad original. It should not be so difficult to admit that no one can create an artistic breakthrough every time.

Face it: Most good cities today are composed principally of competent copies, marred by just a few failed (usually Modernist) original buildings. Bad cities simply reverse the ratio. Test it yourself: Travel to a city and ask any host to help you find a bad building built prior to 1930 (a period when buildings were invariably "copied"). You may well spend all day driving around in a vain search. Now, look for a bad building built after 1960 (the era of "originality"). You will probably find one just by turning your head. Then, to confirm the point, try finding a good building designed after 1960. You will again usually find yourself on a long drive.

It is no mean achievement that the artistic avant-garde has been able to saddle the neutral, technical term of "copy" with an intrinsically negative connotation. It is certainly not a negative term in most other endeavors, and in its use here it is also inaccurate. What architects actually do is *emulate*, otherwise known as participating in a tradition. That is the design methodology that has sustained architectural craft for several millennia. That is the practice which is responsible for most of the places worth inhabiting today, including Ms. Huxtable's own dwelling and the city she occupies herself.

In truth, Ms. Huxtable's objection in this case is not to copying, but to the fact that it is traditional architecture that is copied. After all, most Modernist architecture is copied from other Modernist architecture. That this does not bother Ms. Huxtable exposes an old and widespread prejudice. What Modernists really hate are new buildings that interact respectfully with older neighborhoods.

At the heart of the Modernist argument is the notion that architectural harmony, reference to the past, and tradition in general is mindless and oppressive. The counter argument is that tradition is a humane antidote to tyranny and selfishness. In the words of Justice Felix Frankfurter: "The ultimate foundation of a free society is the binding tie of cohesive sentiment.... Gather up

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applied to American locales such as downtown Oakland.

From 1987 until just recently, Boston architect Michael Dennis worked on an ambitious project to expand the campus of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh by interpreting and extending the best traits of the college's existing architecture. Carnegie Mellon organized its growth and refurbishing around a traditional plan: consistent architecture, quadrangles, and what planners call strong "axes"—direct lines for the pedestrian pathways, focusing people's views on important buildings or grand panoramas.

The biggest architectural influence on Carnegie Mellon from 1904 to 1932, when Andrew Carnegie's school was just getting established, was a New York architect trained in Beaux-Arts techniques named Henry Hornbostel. With cream-colored brick, white terra-cotta trim, and pale gray granite and concrete, punctuated by multi-colored bands of terra cotta, Hornbostel created a coherent campus. The buildings constructed over the past 14 years hew closely to the original color scheme and use many of the original materials. The styling deftly melds historical and contemporary influences. Buildings are shaped to form "outdoor rooms" that students and teachers find immensely appealing. Interiors are distinguished by artwork such as a powerful 11-by-200-foot penciled mural by Douglas Cooper depicting Pittsburgh—its geography, institutions, industry, workers, and history. Even the new parking garage serves a greater purpose, forming a handsome "street wall" on busy Forbes Avenue and supporting, on the opposite side, the bleachers overlooking an athletic field.

Carnegie Mellon's tradition-inspired architecture does what architecture is supposed to: It nourishes the human spirit. "You grow up as a student wanting to be *au courant* and on the edge," Michael Dennis once told a reporter. But then "when you have to build next to somebody like Hornbostel, you forget all that stuff."

Architecture should proceed as the law does, upholding forms that have gained acceptance over time, and expanding or diverging from them cautiously.

There is a place for innovation, but it should proceed carefully. "There are plenty of forums for discussing cutting-edge ideas, such as publications, competitions, and exhibits. Not every idea has to be built," notes Washington, D.C. architect Dhiru Thadani.

If today's architectural avant-garde could develop respect for the interests of other parties, absorb some needed humility, and learn to pursue change in careful ways, the rest of us who have to inhabit their landscapes would benefit enormously. Avant-garde buildings often fail precisely because they try to invent too much. Experience is a great teacher—if you are not too headstrong to learn from it.

the traditions of a people, transmit them from generation to generation, and thereby create the continuity of a treasured common life which constitutes civilization."

What we have achieved with the Modernist design process, to put it bluntly, is an appalling win-loss ratio. Pursuing originality rather than emulation is simply an undependable way to build livable communities. In no other profession—not medicine, not law, not car design, not athletics—would such awful success rates be tolerated. In medicine it would be a massacre; in sports the coach would be sacked. And yet in the field of architecture we are required to accept a litany of disappointments on the small, infinitesimally small, chance that a masterpiece might emerge. This state of affairs may be acceptable to most architects, but to anyone who cares for the health of cities it is simply not worth it.

There is a related question: What do real people say? When a building is designed through any sort of public process, one where the users, or even passersby, have a voice, we know that the strong preference is for traditional (i.e., "copied") structures. Democracy leads inexorably to traditional architecture.

Modernist architecture is, in fact, suitable only for the very wealthy: They can afford to build it, to maintain it, and to move out of it when the experiment fails (as it usually does). I have always recommended the practice of Modernist architecture on the wealthy, but I consider it irresponsible to saddle others with its rigors and frailties, for experience shows that not even people too poor to be choosy will tolerate the inhumanity of most Modern buildings (as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found out in its housing projects).

This is not to entirely discard architectural dissonance or the option of experimental work. But it is important that such buildings be exceptions. My view is that most private buildings should join in a relatively harmonious cityscape, while some public buildings may express the idiosyncratic aspirations of the institutions they embody, or the creativity of their architects.

In any case, it's a mistake to dismiss most traditional buildings as mere copies. The visual discernment of many critics has been coarsened by continuous exposure to Modernism. Because the Modernist ethos requires constant radical breaks, the subtleties of progress, evolution, and improvement get short shrift. Anxious architects feel they must make loud, obvious gestures. The critical eye becomes accustomed to the exaggerated, the strained, the hysterical. It's like someone who, after listening continuously to heavy metal music, finds that all baroque music sounds alike to him.

Miami-based architect Andres Duany, the father of New Traditionalist design and town planning, was profiled in TAE*'s November/December 1996 issue, and wrote* "Three Cheers for Gentrification" *for our April/May 2001 issue.*

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The Death of Modern Art

By James Howard Kunstler

"More vomit."

A few years ago, when I was married to a charming, wealthy woman, we went around our town shopping for a house. Virtually all of the homes the realtors dragged us through were large, expensive, even historic, owned by doctors, lawyers, executives, and their upper-income brethren. I was shocked, though, to see what they had on their walls: mostly nothing except, by order of frequency, airbrushed yearbook photos of their kids, copper wall "pieces" of sailboats, fabric "landscapes" and similar banalities, various "folk art" objects constructed 20 minutes before sale, and some desultory museum posters. I don't remember seeing a single real painting.

I was dismayed by the sheer lack of interest in art. So many serious, professional people dwelling, despite the market value of their homes, in a sort of domestic squalor. The absence of art seemed to occur, I noticed, in proportion with the dissolution of families—a lot of these houses were on the market due to divorce. It was obvious, too, that all the discretionary spending money of these households had gone into cars, electronic gadgetry, computer paraphernalia, and other toys. But something else is also clear: Few people are moved enough by the art produced today to want it in their homes.

In our time, art no longer resides much in the upper-middle-class household. Where is it found instead? Well, in corporate

James Howard Kunstler is the author of several books, including The City in Mind: Notes on the Urban Condition, *just published.*

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"I haven't much time. Just show me your masterpieces."

boardrooms (though it is ironic that the executives who toil for these corporations usually live in expensive homes devoid of contemporary art). And in museums. Plus the art departments of universities that train museum managers. Art as a vocation having marched off into the metaphysical ether over the last century, art ownership has become a hermetic activity, not a popular enthusiasm.

To expect the people of one time to behave like people of another time may be silly. The American industrial plutocrats who bought Old Masters by the shipload hung paintings of the anguished Christ on the walls of their mansions for reasons far different from what the artists of 1573, or their patrons, may have had in mind. In many nineteenth-century bourgeois homes, paintings were a somewhat elevated form of decor, one-of-a-kind works, executed within certain technical conventions, for invoking beauty and truth in small doses. Truth and beauty are powerful forces, and middle-class people busy removing spleens and probating estates can only be expected to absorb so much of them in their leisure time.

But over recent decades, art has altogether forsaken the invocation of beauty and truth as a governing objective. In the train wreck of culture and authority that the twentieth century represented, all the previous sortings of human meaning were abandoned, smoking in the ditch of history; what we have been left with is a trade in debris. That a lot of modern art looks like debris is therefore relevant—I am thinking specifically now of a Whitney Museum biennial exhibition of the 1990s, which included one "piece" that was a gigantic blob of fabricated plastic vomit, of the kind that used to be sold in Times Square joke shops when I was a kid, only ten times bigger. Modern art exhibits have become exceedingly political, with the angry women rampant and anathematizing all other modes of expression except their polemics.

The twentieth century was a kind of nervous breakdown for western civilization. In art, it brought us extreme abstraction resulting in a tendency to replace conscious awareness with strictly personal symbolism—precisely the same thing that is most characteristic of mental illness in individual human beings. This process can only be understood if one accepts that civilized humans long shared a consensus about what constitutes reality—with plenty of room for interpretation and originality within that consensus, which in the best of cultures is necessarily broad and cosmopolitan, admitting and successfully integrating many points of view. The consensus about truth and beauty was robust in the years preceding World War I, and hence many beautiful paintings and sculptures were produced using the artistic forms of the era—technical art conventions also being a product of consensus among those who practice art.

A return to mental health in the sick usually entails a reconnection of the individual to the consensus about reality. This permits that individual to function socially. Modern art has not so far been able to make that return trip.

After abstraction became established as the norm in art practice and art academia, another distorting element entered the scene: extreme narcissism, an excessive preoccupation with the self, a malady that in the case of the art world and its denizens went miles beyond garden variety self-absorption into extreme grandiosity. Add to this the diminishing capacity of Americans to distinguish between show biz and reality, between celebrity and achievement. (This, after all, was Andy Warhol's chief subject matter, a technician of fame for fame's sake.) All this culminates in a nation whose response to calamity is often the herding-together of teddy bears—an operation that, in recent decades, could easily be accepted as "an art installation."

My personal sense is that the Modernist racket is utterly played out. We are entering an age of global strife and national austerity in which truth and beauty will be essential survival tools. We've had enough cultural pranks and party tricks to last ten generations, and I expect next a stark reaction against all the deliberate nonsense of recent artistic production.

Only a nation as culturally obese as America in the second half of the twentieth century could afford to discount truth and beauty to practically zero. Soon their value will revive as we seek meaning in lives lived much closer to the bone. It's getting dark up here in Western civ. It's time for artists to get used to it—and get serious.

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"This says he's one of the leaders of the *lost and found* art movement."

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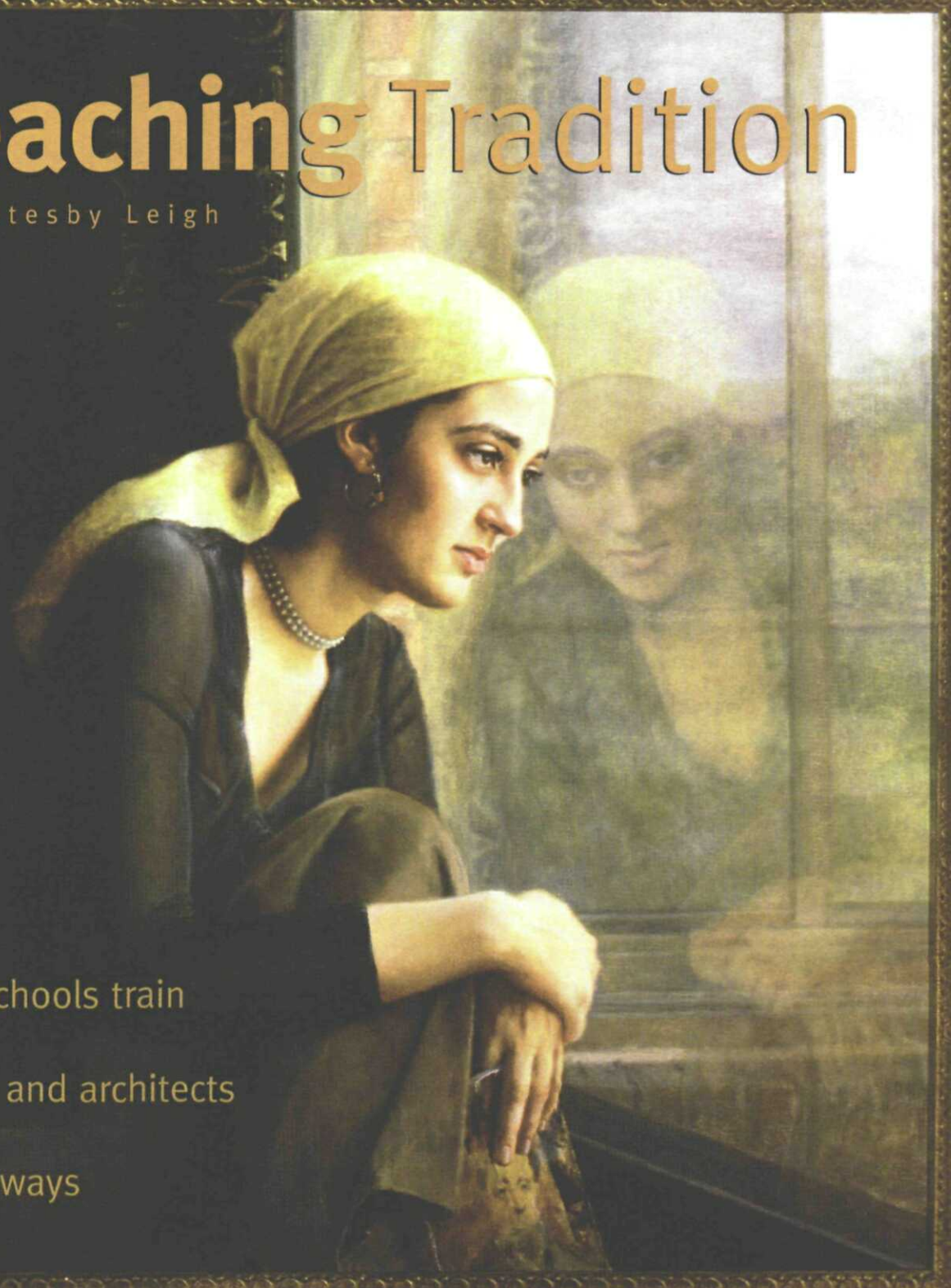
Teaching Tradition

By Catesby Leigh



New schools train artists and architects in old ways

"Reflections" by Jacqueline Capp.

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At age 50, Minneapolis resident Jacqueline Hamlett Capp might seem a little old for an art student with professional ambitions. But after a profoundly discouraging experience decades ago with an art class she took at Indiana's DePauw University (more on that later), and with a 20-year career in dentistry behind her, she is now bent on becoming a portrait painter. Vain illusion? Maybe not. One of her pictures, a portrait of a pensive young woman that shows her reflection in a window, took a prize earlier this year at a convention of the American Society of Portrait Artists, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. "I plan to paint for many years," Capp says confidently.

Catesby Leigh

Jacqueline Hamlett Capp in her cubicle at The Atelier.

Capp is studying at The Atelier, a four-year studio school which limits the number of students to 14. The Atelier is one of two art schools in Minneapolis which provide rigorous training in realistic painting based mainly on the naturalistic approach to drawing the human figure prescribed in the studio schools, or ateliers, of Paris during the nineteenth century. Eminent American artists such as John Singer Sargent and Thomas Eakins were trained in just such schools, in both cases in Paris.

Minneapolis, a major locale for the resurgence of traditional painting, is one of the numerous places around the nation where once-moribund artistic traditions are re-emerging. There are colleges and universities where traditional architecture and urban design, after years of consignment to oblivion, are again being taught. In cities like Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia, there are studio schools and small academies where students aspire to draw like Velázquez rather than de Kooning, to model sculptures like Saint-Gaudens, not Calder. This traditionalist resurgence is gathering force in the heartland and on the coasts alike.

"It's a discernible movement at this point," says Alvin Holm, 65, a leading classical architect in Philadelphia. "Twenty years ago I was a little lonesome. There are a lot of warm bodies now. I don't know how it's going to become chic. You need that for full-blown success. I'm hoping that there will be enough people that it will become trendy."

Peter Bougie, who founded Bougie Studio in Minneapolis in 1988, offers a program akin to The Atelier's. He and his associate Brian Lewis now have a dozen pupils, which is all they can handle. "I think that people are attracted now to more traditional art forms, because they represent an aspect of the visual world that is identifiable, recognizable," Bougie says. "Where I'm seeing a special interest is that people want to work with the human figure, they want to do work that is expressive…naturalistic, allegorical, religious—any number of things."

As far as making a living is concerned, still-life and portrait work are the most promising pursuits for students at the Minneapolis schools. Mike Klein, a 21-year-old native of Minot, North Dakota is looking to make it big as a portrait painter in New York. Sporting a black T-shirt and black jeans, with his reddish hair slicked back, he looks like a hipster who might be inclined to make a stupendous expressionistic mess of a canvas. In practice, he takes his cues from Velázquez, Sargent, and the Boston impressionist Edmund Tarbell. In his cubicle at The Atelier, located in a warehouse near downtown Minneapolis, he's working on a commissioned portrait of a young hockey player, who looks out at the viewer with a determined expression while wrapping tape around his stick.

Bougie pupil Julie Schiffmayer, 27, also aspires to be a portrait painter. A San Antonio native, she graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, where she took life-drawing classes effectively devoid of instruction. "The professors didn't have the skills to teach. There was no structure to the classes, and the teacher never talked to me," she says. Aside from portraiture, Schiffmayer hopes to paint ambitious narrative subjects. In her cubicle she has worked up an oil sketch copy of Bouguereau's "Flagellation of Christ."

Another young Bougie student, Isaac Zupetz, aims to illustrate children's books. A native of the small northern Minnesota town of Virginia, he studied at the Ecole d'Art Emile Cohn in Lyon, France, a school which "tried to find a happy medium between classical training and students who wanted to make a living." France has a notable tradition of hard-cover comic books—just think of Tintin of Asterix—as well as *Classics Illustrated*-style versions of great literary works. Cohn alumni produce such versions of old classics and new fiction alike, for both adults and children. It is not only a rigorous and competitive program, but expensive. After two years, Zupetz returned to the States and now works as a cook at a downtown Minneapolis diner to support his studies.

Why Minneapolis? Forty-five years ago, a gifted and determined native named Richard Lack returned there after studying painting in New England. It was his goal to practice and teach art the way he thought it ought to be done. The method to which he subscribed was all but extinct. But Lack generated a bona fide school of painting, the Minneapolis School, with a significant number of artists, programs of instruction, and an organization, the American Society of Classical Realism, that publishes a semi-annual journal. Lack's pupils have in turn opened studio schools in Wisconsin, Texas, Illinois, New York, even Italy. Lack has also had an exceptionally prolific career as a painter of landscapes, portraits, still-lifes, interior scenes of domestic life, and ambitious allegorical pictures.

The younger students at the studio schools in Minneapolis have had it much easier than Lack. True, many of them have had to find their own way into these programs, but the post-modern "anything goes" dispensation has facilitated the reemergence of tradition. Lack, now 73, came of age at a time when Modernism

TAE *contributing writer Catesby Leigh is a Washington, D.C. art and architecture critic.*

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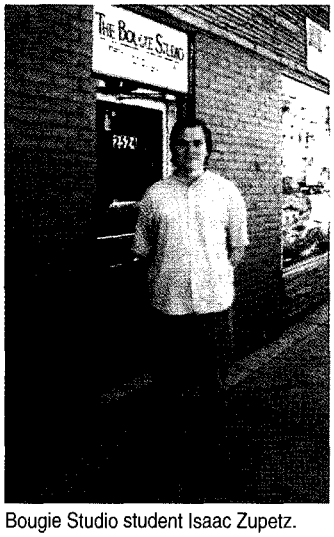
was utterly dominant, and utterly intolerant of traditional art forms. "The collapse of European culture around the time of World War I," Lack says, "was very tragic for people like me."

Lack knew he wanted to be a painter from childhood, and spent his youth in search of a teacher—without success. In his early twenties, he was living in New York City, spending his mornings copying pictures in the Metropolitan Museum. He was just about to pack his bags and enroll as a chemistry student at the University of Minnesota when he got a tip about a painter named R. H. Ives Gammell who could give him the kind of instruction he craved. The scion of a prosperous Rhode Island family, Gammell (1893-1981) had gone to Paris on the eve of World War I, found the academic masters all dead, their studio maxims fading from memory, and big classes taught by men of little talent. Gammell came back home and learned to paint in the realist, academic manner. He tackled narrative and allegorical themes and painted impressionistic landscapes.

The modern notion that artists are geniuses entitled by some mysterious writ to re-invent their craft from scratch is fading.

After several years of study with Gammell (and more than a decade of practice on his own), Lack began teaching in the late 1960s. In 1971 he established the Atelier Lack in Minneapolis. Now called The Atelier, it is run by two of his pupils, Dale Redpath and Cyd Wicker. For all the progress that's been made, Lack and some of his prize students continue to feel they're part of an "underground." Locally, says Stephen Gjertson, 52, an outstanding Minneapolis School painter, "we've been known as a bunch of reactionary artists. Our shows were never reviewed, and when they were it was in the most derogatory terms." *Classical Realism Journal*, which Lack launched under a different name during the 1980s, was the School's response to media indifference and hostility.



Bougie Studio student Isaac Zupetz.

The strongest connection the Minneapolis ateliers have to their nineteenth-century Parisian prototypes, says Bougie, is "the fundamental notion that the human figure is a very difficult thing to render realistically. If you can master that, that gives you a good foundation for approaching a great many things."

Students at the Minneapolis schools start each morning drawing live models for three hours, five days a week, throughout four years of study. In the initial phase of their studies, they also draw, in charcoal, plaster casts of classical sculpture, then proceed to paint them in black and white oil. The students thus acquire a feeling for proportion and the ability to use light and shadow to model three-dimensional forms on a two-dimensional surface. Personal styles gradually emerge as they move on to use color in still-lifes and portraits, and acquire a facility with the brush. Eventually they advance to interior scenes with human figures, and charcoal drawings and oil paintings of full-figure nudes.

But students should learn to see painting as more than a matter of representing the human form and other objects, says The Atelier's Redpath. "It's about the spaces between objects, about relationships of color...about lines flowing into one another. It's a lot of information to cram into four years. In the past, European youngsters who showed promise learned to draw in their hometowns, acquiring the basic skills with local artists." Then they would go to Paris or another capital for advanced training in their teens or early twenties. "Now we have college graduates who've developed habits we have to undo," Redpath says. Gammell's rule of thumb was that if someone hadn't started studying drawing by the age of 13, he'd never learn. Today's traditional art schools are more flexible.

The structure of the Minneapolis programs gives them a great advantage over other schools across the country where representational painting is taught. Jake Platt, 26, came to the Bougie Studio from Seattle. At 18 he was creating abstract paintings and collages, and "felt like I was making a disposable commodity," he says. He changed course, and though he found teachers in Seattle art schools who were on his wavelength, couldn't get the training he wanted. "Each faculty member had his own curriculum. You got the theory, but not the hands-on instruction. Here, it's 30 hours a week of drawing and painting, with criticism and help solving problems."

While Gammel and Lack were struggling to preserve traditional art instruction, Henry Hope Reed was struggling to preserve classical architectural practice in the same atmosphere of Modernist triumphalism. Half a century ago, Reed denounced Modernism's puritanical indifference to sensual qualities in architecture while serving as a visiting instructor at Yale. He and a distinguished Yale professor of urban planning, Christopher Tunnard, were practically alone in academe in questioning the wholesale rejection of tradition in the art and architecture of the day.

Reed's classical crusade has slowly gathered force, and he remains active at age 86. His 1959 book *The Golden City*, which juxtaposed photographs of traditional (mainly classical) buildings with Modernist structures, was a revealing indictment of Modernism's Brave New World. A decade later, Reed co-founded Classical America, a New York-based arts organization whose activities include publication of new editions of essential art and architecture texts that have fallen out of circulation. One example is a student's edition of the splendid nineteenth-century architectural engravings of Renaissance Rome by the French architect Paul Letarouilly.

Starting in the late '70s, Classical America sought to redress the absence of traditional architectural instruction by introducing a course on perspective rendering, composition, and draw-

Catesby Leigh

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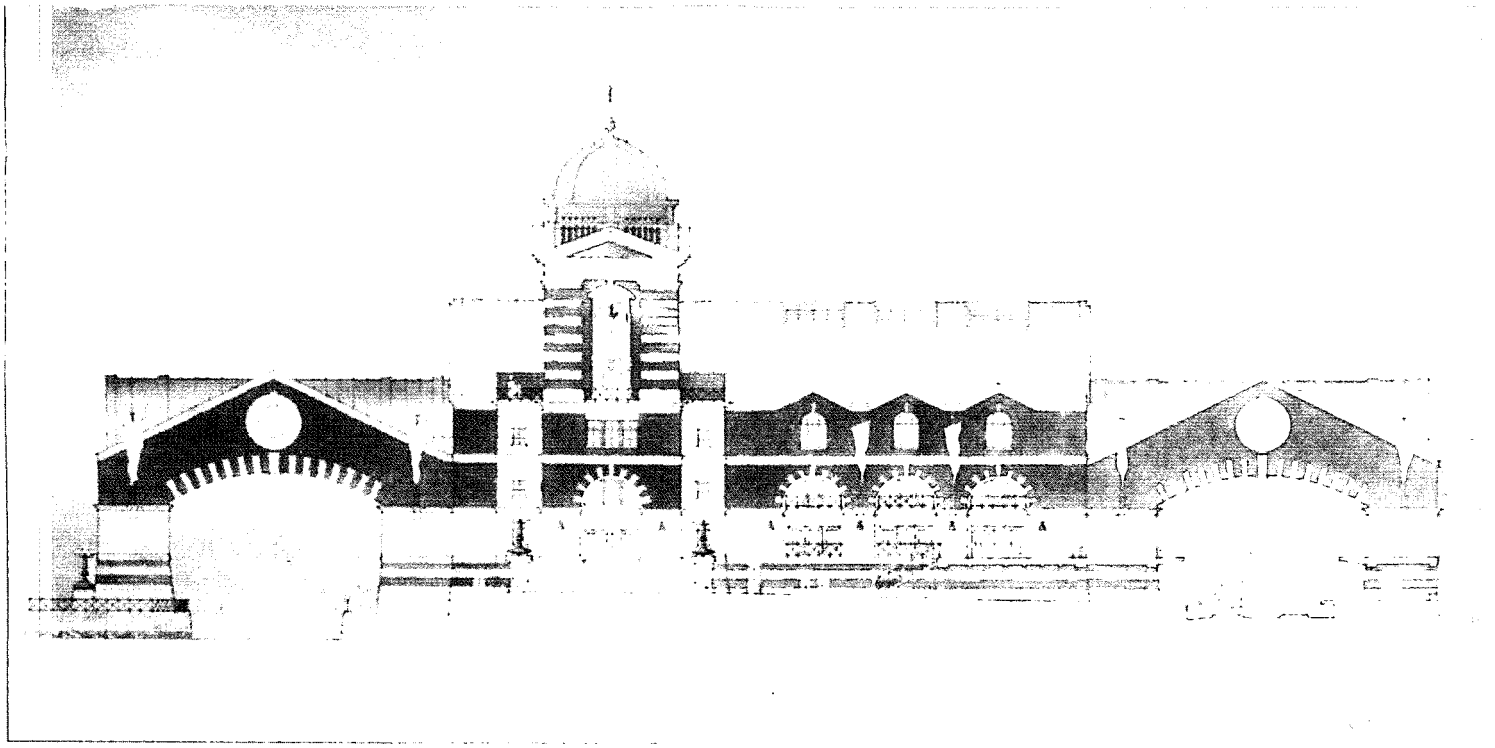

Design for a New York City ferry terminal by Notre Dame architecture student Scott Reinthaler.

ing the classical orders. Reed's associate Pierce Rice, a laconic painter and critic, offered courses on these subjects at the University of Pennsylvania and the National Academy of Design in New York City. In 1977, Philadelphia architect Al Holm, who had received his master's in architecture from Yale two decades earlier, enrolled in Rice's class at Penn. "I took Pierce's course four times in a row and it turned my life around," says Holm. At Yale, Holm had taken the celebrated course in drawing offered by the Bauhaus master of geometric abstraction, Josef Albers. "Both Pierce and Albers were good teachers. But Albers said that if you could see, you could draw, and I learned subsequently that that wasn't true. Pierce taught me you don't have to make up conventions—that the best way to learn to draw a horse is to copy good drawings of horses."

Holm currently offers variants on Rice's Classical America courses at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia. He is involved with a long-term Classical America project to produce a series of videocassettes offering instruction in drawing the classical orders. Holm also has employed his belatedly acquired classical expertise as co-designer of the Metropolitan Museum galleries devoted to nineteenth-century French art.

Several former pupils of Rice and Holm have been active in another important classical organization, the Institute of Classical Architecture, also headquartered in New York City. Founded in 1991, the Institute offers a broad curriculum in classical design, theory, and drawing through evening and weekend courses, as well as an intensive six-week summer program for architecture students. It has even embarked on a series of weekend workshops to be held in various Florida locales for production builders—professionals who aren't licensed architects but are responsible for the design of houses in residential suburban subdivisions. The Institute also publishes an annual journal, *The Classicist,* which, among other things, publicizes traditional architectural projects across the country, as well as student work from the growing number of colleges and universities where at least one faculty member offers a course in classical design.

The only U.S. architecture school that currently maintains a fully classical program is the University of Notre Dame. Transformation of the Notre Dame program began in 1989 with the appointment of classical architect Thomas Gordon Smith as dean. Smith served for a decade in that post, encountering initial resistance among professors and students, as well as concerns among university administrators that such unconventional training might make it hard for graduates to get jobs. But Smith stuck to his guns—and prevailed. He beefed up the school's graduate program, personally designed the much-needed renovation and expansion of the architecture school's building, and hired four new professors. Notre Dame students encounter a variety of interpretations of classical architecture, but with an emphasis much more on enduring first principles of design rather than on theories enjoying their 15 minutes of academic fame.

The University of Miami in Florida is home to another noteworthy architecture school. Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk was already a tenured professor there when she and her husband, Andres Duany, were laying out the Florida panhandle town of Seaside along traditional lines two decades ago. She now serves as the school's dean, while Duany teaches in the master's program. The school focuses on real-world community-planning issues in the university's vicinity; the regional architectural traditions of South Florida and the Caribbean; and the history of New World town planning from Spanish Colonial times down to the advent of suburbia. As at Notre Dame, Miami students are required to produce architectural drawings by hand, rather than simply relying on computer-design programs, as is now the norm at architecture schools.

Contrary to the initial concerns of Notre Dame administrators, its architecture school's graduates have been finding jobs readily since it went classical. Graduates have been sought out by firms in New York, Washington, Boston, Charleston, Chicago, London, and elsewhere. Although Modernist schemes continue to dominate high-profile academic, corporate, cultural, and

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Sculpture class at the Schuler School.

government architecture, Notre Dame graduates have benefited from the great demand for classical high-end residential design. Institutional projects like churches and university buildings are starting to come their way as well. Miami graduates, meanwhile, have the competitive advantage of training in a hotbed of the "New Urbanism" that Duany and Plater-Zyberk introduced at Seaside. Indeed, the practical, hands-on instruction offered at Miami interests Modernist as well as traditional architectural firms.

A century ago, Baltimore sculptor Hans Schuler Sr. launched a career modeling statues, classical architectural elements, busts, trophies, and medals. Schuler and his son and daughter-in-law were associated with the Maryland Institute's schools of painting and sculpture. The Institute retained a traditional orientation well into the 1950s, when an Albers disciple was brought in from Yale to overhaul the curriculum. Schuler Sr., a longtime director of the Institute, had died in 1951. His son, Hans Jr., and daughter-in-law, Ann Didusch Schuler, taught sculpture and painting at the Institute, respectively, but decided to break with the new regime.

The studio and residence that Hans Sr. had built decades before became the home of the Schuler School of Fine Art. The place teems with the patriarch's work: Dynamic bronze sculptures of the Three Furies and the Four Horsemen adorn the hall, while a large plaster cast of his Adam and Eve, portrayed as desolate exiles from the Garden, is a prominent fixture in the studio, which is illuminated by a huge northern skylight.

The school opened its doors in 1959. Hans and Ann were joined at the outset by Jacques Maroger, an eminent French conservator of paintings who had been in charge of the Louvre's laboratory before fleeing Europe in 1939. Maroger's main concern was rediscovering the traditional Flemish method of laying in color in transparent layers that accounted for the lustrous tones achieved by Rubens and other great masters. Schuler students cook the "Maroger medium," which consists of linseed oil heated together with lead oxide, then mixed with a crystal mastic varnish. Next, they prime the colored pigments they grind themselves with the medium. This process reputedly makes for a faster-drying, more durable paint less prone to cracking and discoloration.

"I grind my pigments every morning," says Will Wilson, who started studying at the Schuler at 14 and taught there for six years. "You have a little more control over the consistency and density of the paint." Wilson, 44, is mentioned by a number of Schuler students as the artist they emulate. Based in San Francisco, he does naturalistic, highly finished pictures, infused with vibrant color and an off-beat sensibility. His wide-ranging *oeuvre* even includes the cover for a Michael Jackson CD.

Hans Jr. died in 1999, but Ann continues to teach at age 84, along with daughter Francesca Schuler Guerin, grandson Andrew Schuler Guerin, and nephew Frederic Schuler Briggs. The Schuler has 25 students, and strongly emphasizes the study of anatomy, which seems fitting as Ann's father and uncle were medical illustrators in the Johns Hopkins medical school's orbit. All students trace bones, copy skeletons and Old Master anatomical drawings, attend lectures on the muscles used in different movements, and learn to see and memorize different parts of the body—the skull, ribcage, the pelvis—as combinations of geometric forms. Unlike the Minneapolis schools, sculpture is an integral part of the four-year course of study.

Fruits of this emphasis on anatomy were evident during a Monday morning visit to the sculpture studio. Alison Bell, 24, a St. Louis native who started taking drawing lessons in junior high school, was sculpting a female figure in a difficult pose—out of her head. As a rule, students at traditional schools would rely on a model. The working title for Bell's sculpture is "Psyche Meets the West Wind." "Anatomy is the hardest thing," Bell says, but adds that without intensive study of anatomy she couldn't model such a complex figure—with its knees bent, its weight on one foot, head turned, one hand on a hip and the other gesturing in alarm.

Elsewhere in the studio, a student models a ram while others copy antique casts, including the bust of Homer, a relief of women in flowing garb, and the head of a goddess. Four beginning students are copying Hans Schuler Jr.'s head of a beauty queen, who looks straight ahead, making a copy a less demanding feat.

"Everything you do here is hard," observes Brady Starr, 19, a first-year student. His experience at a magnet high school for the arts in the Baltimore suburb of Towson was very different. "They gave you a model, and said, 'draw.' Any way you wanted," he says. Sporting an earring and a pinhead protruding from his lower lip, with his tangled locks gathered in binder clips, Starr does not look the aspiring "reactionary" artist.

Peter Adams, a California painter preparing to open a traditional art academy in Pasadena, where academic draftsmanship as well as impressionistic color methods will be taught, says, "We try to tell people that we're not a conservative organization, we're a traditional organization." His academy, to be joined by a museum, is presently scheduled to open in 2003, and to expand gradually to 90 pupils from an initial contingent of 15. "Kids with tattoos and green hair are ready to enroll in our program. For the last 100 years it hasn't been like that," says Adams, president of the California Art Club, under whose auspices the California Art Academy and Museum project has been launched. Established in 1909, the club is a thriving institution with 350 artist members—all of them practicing professionally—as well as a waiting list of 800 applicants. All the painting and sculpture shown in the club's annual juried exhibitions is representational, and the painting is predominantly impressionist work done outdoors.

Some teachers, meanwhile, are reaching back far beyond the nineteenth-century academic method of naturalistic drawing, teaching students to interpret the human figure as Renaissance and ancient Greek artists did. Brad Parker, a gifted

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sculptor, teaches eight students in the basement of his home in Bethesda, Maryland. He uses live models, but would prefer to rely on a high-quality collection of plaster casts of great sculptural works.

The preeminent sculptors of the past observed distinct patterns that shape the surface of the human body, says Parker. Michelangelo, Bologna, de Vries, and Houdon distilled the body into a series of idealized shapes. In so doing they created figures exalted above the human forms we encounter in nature. The decline of Western sculpture, Parker maintains, was linked to decreasing study of the works of the masters, and increasing reliance on live models, a trend that emerged early in the nineteenth century.

"Without a cast collection you can't establish the essentials of a traditional education," says Parker, who works on portrait commissions in addition to teaching. "I do the best I can here through use of live models, but the ideal would be to have a cast collection. Unfortunately, the casts in our country either are of very meager quality, or they've been destroyed." During the 1950s, students took to vandalizing or destroying casts at schools like the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, where Parker studied from 1977 to 1983. Instructors brought casts home for protection against this curious outburst of iconoclasm.

During the 1950s, art students took to destroying casts of great ancient sculptures.

Randy Melick does drawings rather than sculptures, but he, too, is inspired more by the Greeks and Michelangelo than by the nineteenth century. Melick, 38, spent most of the last decade teaching at the New York Academy of Art, and the sense of freedom from gravity he imparts to some of his more ethereal figures is rarely found in the art of the last 150 years. For Melick, drawing means "giving a clarity to living organisms that they don't actually have." He and painter Ted Schmidt have been the principal exponents of a classical approach to drawing at the New York Academy.

And yet the nineteenth-century tradition seems a natural fit to many skilled artists these days. "It's where we were before the train wreck," says the highly regarded realist painter Jacob Collins, who founded the Water Street Atelier in Brooklyn in 1997. "It's where I can go to get back on track. It's the last time when drawing and painting were not part of some revolutionary activity. And it's not that long ago."

There are currently 25 students at Water Street, and three alumni teach there. Half a dozen students work professionally while pursuing their studies. "One student just sold a big still-life for $12,000," Collins says. "Dealers are coming through all the time. It's something I wrestle with because the seduction of selling can be a problem—it can be a distraction. Their still-life work will be so much better if they learn to paint at least a pretty good figure composition. It's the struggle with the human figure that makes an artist a humanist in the Western tradition."

Alas, there are plenty of atelier students who don't get the chance to wrestle with the temptations Collins' pupils face. Out in Minneapolis, Dale Redpath's mantra is, "This is not an easy way to make a living." A Midwest artist must confront the widespread prejudice that "serious" art is only made on the East or West Coasts. Even so, a significant number, if not a majority, of Redpath's students do go on to paint professionally. What is most remarkable, at this stage of the game, is that a growing number of Americans raised in a postmodern culture are being won over to art and architecture instruction that demands conformance to objective standards that are not easily met. The romantic notion that artists are geniuses entitled by some mysterious writ to re-invent their craft from scratch persists, but, slowly, more sustainable and less puerile notions of how great art is created are making a comeback.

We've made progress since the days when Jacqueline Capp, the Minneapolis art-student-turned-dentist-turned-aspiring-artist, had to plead with her art teacher at DePauw for permission to paint pictures of recognizable subjects for her term project. She promised that in return she would abandon any thoughts of majoring in art, and her teacher acquiesced. You see, he had prescribed that his first-year students make something out of plastic. Any way they wanted.

"Fancy" by Schuler School graduate and former teacher Will Wilson.

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Regional Vigor

The Ace Card of American Art

By Michael Medved

National reaction to the events of September 11 showed that New York maintains its indisputable dominance as cultural capital of the United States. Americans in all corners of the continent, though sometimes grumbling over the arrogance of New Yorkers, still look to the Big Apple as our country's main town. But the stunning resilience of our civilization in the wake of Terrorist Tuesday highlighted another under-appreciated facet of our culture—its true strength derives not from its concentration in one great center, but its dispersion across a wide variety of regional capitals of startling vitality. Our artistic strength is spread across the entire nation, just like our economic vigor.

Here in the Great Northwest, I attended the opening-night concert of the Seattle Symphony just four days after the nightmarish assaults on New York and Washington. The leadership of our great orchestra decided that the show must go on—despite the fact that the scheduled guest conductor, Andreas Delfs, couldn't arrive due to the stricken state of the air transport system. Seattle's own prodigiously gifted assistant conductor, Alastair Willis, stepped to the podium in his place, and led his hometown musicians with absolutely electrifying intensity. The orchestra played with blazing commitment, particularly in Aaron Copland's patriotic "Lincoln Portrait," with its eerily appropriate narration: "The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion." Many members of the audience rose and wept openly through their standing ovation.

Beyond the dramatics of that particular moment in history, the concertgoers felt exhilarated by the sheer aesthetic splendor of the experience: listening to one of the finest orchestras on earth in a gleaming new concert hall of unsurpassed acoustic splendor. If Benaroya Hall had been constructed in New York City or Los Angeles, we would read weekly stories in the international press about its superb sonic qualities. But since this artistic grandeur flourishes in the Great North-wet, our own soggy though cozy corner of the continent, most connoisseurs in the rest of the country have not yet caught on to the overall excellence of the Seattle Symphony. It's probably better that way, for the sake of our city and for the general health of American high culture.

Once upon a time, every artist of appreciable talent and ambition—not only in music but also the theater, literature, painting, and other fields—made his way to New York City, draining regional centers of all vitality and consigning them to a permanent status of second-rate sleepiness. That is no longer the case, as performers and creators of international stature increasingly choose to associate themselves with artistic enterprises in the American boondocks.

Take our own situation in Seattle, where Maestro Gerard Schwarz has led the orchestra to excellence over 18 years. His more than 80 recordings with the Seattle Symphony, especially emphasizing seldom-heard American composers of romantic temperament, have built his reputation, and Seattle's, around the world. Fortunately, our music director feels an admirable loyalty to our Emerald City—where he's proud to make his home, and his children attend local schools—and he has turned away the sort of absurdly inflated contracts that stole our local Seattle Mariners baseball stars Randy Johnson, Ken Griffey, Jr., and Alex Rodriguez.

But it's easy to see why Schwarz stays in Seattle. Last season I heard him lead his orchestra in an impassioned, rip-roaring, knock-your-socks-off performance of Mahler's diabolically difficult Sixth Symphony. In our elegant new concert hall, with its glass lobby overlooking the moonlit waters of Elliott Bay, the music growled, crackled, and erupted with immediate intimacy. In this sparkling sound environment, with a dedicated ensemble

Former PBS and New York Post *film critic Michael Medved hosts a nationally syndicated radio talk show about the intersection of politics and pop culture.*

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responding to a conductor it knows and reveres, one can hear performances that might be matched—but seldom topped—in New York, Berlin, London, or Vienna.

The happy situation of the Seattle Symphony reflects an often-overlooked strength of American high culture—its robust regional vitality. In France, nothing important happens outside Paris; in Britain, London is the only show worth catching. In Russia, Peter the Great injected new vigor into the national culture by developing St. Petersburg as a cultural rival to Moscow, but the failure of the Soviet Union ever to inject dynamism into its other capital cities (Tashkent? Kiev? Minsk? Vilnius?) helped seal the fate of its empire.

The United States, on the other hand, boasts three different world capitals—Washington, D.C. for government, Los Angeles for pop culture, and New York for money and the arts—plus many thriving regional capital cities that have developed their own cultural resources of often startling quality. Boston, of course, is the hub of New England, Chicago is the cultured colossus of the Great Lakes, Atlanta serves as a queen city of the South, Minneapolis lights the northern plains, San Francisco dazzles many in Northern California and Silicon Valley, and so forth. Numerous cities—Baltimore, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Nashville, Kansas City, Dallas, Detroit, and many more—offer dazzlingly rich and often underappreciated artistic resources.

When I moved to Seattle more than five years ago from glitzy L.A., my friends worried about my survival so far from "the center of the action." In reality, our family has been invigorated by cultural offerings in every area—from galleries, to theatre, to ballet. The Seattle Opera recently mounted an ambitious, woodsy, nature-based interpretation of Wagner's formidable Ring Cycle. Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatist August Wilson makes his home in the Seattle area, as do popular novelists such as Tom Robbins, David Guterson, and Robert Ferrigno, renowned glassmaker Dale Chihuly (who created chandeliers for both the new concert hall and the new baseball stadium) and, until his recent death, the most celebrated of all black American painters, Jacob Lawrence. The Seattle International Film Festival offers a stunning array of events and draws the largest attendance of any film festival in the United States.

I expect that residents of other "second tier" creative centers throughout the United State could cite similar experiences, pointing to the exuberance of cultural offerings far from Lincoln Center or Carnegie Hall. A few years ago, for instance, when *Time* attempted a solemn ranking of American orchestras, the magazine startled many casual observers by awarding the St. Louis Symphony second place—just behind the incomparable Chicago Symphony in first.

It's more than prosperity that draws so many of the world's best musicians and painters and performers of all kinds to the United States—it's our decentralized strength which opens up so many opportunities. A similar phenomenon could be observed more than a century ago in Germany. From 1700 to 1900, Germany produced an astonishing array of creative giants, especially in music, in part, historians suggest, because of its numerous and lively regional centers. Before German unification in 1870 concentrated everything in Berlin, more than a hundred independent duchies and principalities thrived in Central Europe—many with their own ambitious royal courts, fostering the arts. The small city of Mannheim boasted the greatest orchestra in Europe in the eighteenth century, because the Elector Palatine tried to burnish his own reputation by assembling the finest players. In the next century, Felix Mendelssohn helped to develop the Gewandhaus Orchestra in provincial Leipzig, while the "Mad King of Bavaria," Ludwig II, lured Richard Wagner to his bumptious province by building him a custom-made opera house in remote Bayreuth. This multi-polar system helped nourish Bach and Telemann, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruckner, Wagner, and many others.

From its earliest days, America has also benefited from the radical decentralization of cultural and intellectual life. The independent development of 13 distinctive colonies ensured that no one city would ever dominate continental life. At the time of the Revolution, Philadelphia was the largest and most civilized metropolis (and the second most populous English-speaking city on earth, after London). Yet Boston boasted more impressive political and theological leadership, in addition to the well-established 140-year-old (even then!) Harvard College. In the early nineteenth century, New York decisively eclipsed Philadelphia in cultural and financial leadership. Our federal system, however, guaranteed that we would never see all power and talent flowing to a single center, following the European trend.

The power of localism also helps explain a broader historical phenomenon keenly pertinent to the current world crisis: The surpassing of Islam by the West over the last millennium. In the year 1000, the Islamic world boasted a more culturally and scientifically advanced civilization than Christian Europe. Part of the strength of that civilization involved its vibrant regional centers. The two greatest cities on earth a thousand years ago were, arguably, Cordoba in Spain and Isfahan in Persia—two powerful centers at the opposite far edges of the Islamic Empire.

Unfortunately for its subsequent history, the Muslim world passed under the control of the Ottoman Turks who imposed a mighty centralizing force, drawing all energy to their capital in Istanbul. Meanwhile, European culture benefited from a riot of competitive nationalism and the emergence of dozens of great cities and cultural capitals. That vibrancy and competition, contrasted with the relatively static, imperial frame of mind that prevailed in Islam, conferred enormous and unmistakable advantages on the West.

Decentralized competition will continue to bring great benefits to America—cultural as well as economic and political—if we properly acknowledge the importance of local endeavors, and keep them flourishing. Seattle won't seize the mantle of World Capital from New York any time soon, but we take great comfort in the fact that many of our home-grown institutions can hold their own with the big-leaguers. As life gradually returns to normal in Manhattan, New Yorkers may once again feel blasé about their Philharmonic and Broadway and great museums. But those of us enjoying burgeoning artistic resources all across America's provinces will always maintain a special connection with regional arts institutions which enrich our lives and help etch our local identities.

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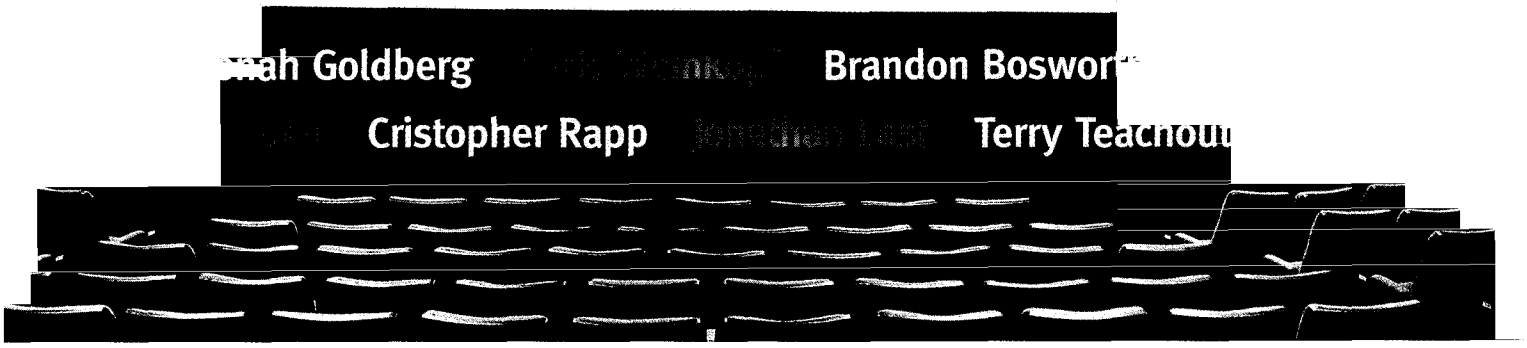
Are Movies Art?

A symposium featuring:



In Art, Popular is OK

By Jonah Goldberg

There are several problems with the "art vs. mere entertainment" debate. The first is the language itself. We don't have a good middle-ground word that describes something that is both artful and fun for many people.

This linguistic hitch is exacerbated by a second problem. A certain elite holds a white-knuckled grip on the term "art," and is reluctant to allow the grubby masses to touch it. This elite overlooks the fact that much high art used to be popular entertainment.

Take cathedrals, the only form of classical art I know much about. The stained glass and stone carvings of medieval cathedrals were intended to tell very specific stories and convey very specific messages to bored and illiterate lay people. They were spectacles that aimed to wow and attract. Yet no one would hesitate today to call the North Rose window of Notre Dame de Paris "art." If the Catholic Church had had access to a Super 8 camera circa 1200, there's little doubt in my mind that Bishop Sully would have been out there with a light meter around his neck shooting movies instead of carving gargoyles.

Sculptors use clay to make art. Masonry supply houses use it to make bricks. Likewise you can make art out of celluloid or you can make junk. *American Pie 2* is not art, but *Breaker Morant* may be. The medium must be separated from the message.

The real problem is those damned elites. Both liberal and conservative, they've constructed a bizarre algebraic equation which finds the amount of "artfulness" to be inversely proportional to the supply and demand. The logic seems to be that if Rodin had allowed thousands of copies to be cast of the "Burghers of Calais" (an easy task given that he had a mold), the volume of statues would have diluted the artfulness in some way.

A similar bias comes into play with film. The more restricted the showing and the smaller the audience, the more likely the pointy heads will be to call it art. But release something in a thousand shopping malls and, regardless of content, it is no longer worthy.

There is merit to the idea that an audience should have to work a little bit to appreciate the finer things. But what the art priesthood has forgotten is that art can be popular, and fun, too.

TAE *contributing writer Jonah Goldberg writes our BEAT THE PRESS.*

It's Just Entertainment (And That's Enough)

By Chris Weinkopf

Artistry in film, as far as I'm concerned, extends about as far as good pyrotechnics. Of course, the *Star Wars* trilogy, *Die Hard*, and *Terminator 2* are my favorite movies. Maybe I'm too immature to appreciate artistic film. Or maybe I'm just enjoying what cinema does best.

The pretensions of some filmmakers and film schools notwithstanding, movies are ultimately TV writ large, and no serious person would argue that the idiot box is any place for high culture. Real art is, by its nature, abstract—the painter's conception of a moment in time; the composer's gift for translating images and emotions into symphonies; the writer's struggle to put a three-dimensional, full-color world onto a two-dimensional, black-and-white page.

But film leaves little room for abstraction—unless it's forced, and nothing makes for worse art than forced abstraction. This makes film a lousy art form by definition. But it also makes it a

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perfect vehicle for entertainment, with its ability to reflect the real world or make fantasy worlds seem real.

The problem with too many filmmakers is that they don't appreciate the importance, even need, for quality entertainment. They believe their work will never be meaningful unless it attains the status of fine art, which leaves them both striving for too much and never living up to their potential.

Movies are to art what TV news is to journalism: a co-opting of the fundamental ingredients, compromised and diluted in the service of entertainment (the ultimate goal, like it or not). "Artistic" films are like informative TV news broadcasts—dull, tedious, and pretentious. It's no coincidence that fans of both tend to belong to the same humorless black-turtleneck crowd.

Just as news is better suited for more serious media, art belongs in a museum or an opera house, not the megaplex. Film can be art, but it is rarely good art, and good art never seems to make for good film.

Chris Weinkopf is an editorial writer and columnist for the Los Angeles Daily News.

High Americana

By Brandon Bosworth

It's been said there are only two uniquely American contributions to the arts: jazz and movies. There is an element of truth to this. Both art forms have heroes (such as jazz's John Coltrane and film's John Ford) and hacks (jazz's Kenny G. and film's...well, just go to your local google-plex to find plenty of examples). Both churn out masterpieces (like Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* or John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon*) as well as embarrassments (unfortunately, far too many to mention). But more important, both show the innovative power of the American mind.

Movies perhaps best represent the ingenuity that characterizes this nation. Ever since Thomas Edison shot his first crude films in 1889, motion pictures have captured the imaginations not only of Americans but of the whole world, in a way no other twentieth-century art form has.

Virtually every major technological advance in film originated in the U.S. In 1926, Hollywood popularized the use of sound and the "talking picture." In 1934, color arrived. The makers of 1933's *King Kong* broke new ground in the use of special effects, as would Ray Harryhausen in the '50s and George Lucas in the '70s. Cinerama and other forms of wide-screen photography made their debut in 1952.

American film has always been at the forefront artistically. In the '20s and '30s comedians such as Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd pioneered the use of stunt work. Around the same time, Cecil B. DeMille created the big-screen historical epic, with its "cast of thousands." Preston Sturges changed the face of screen humor with his Depression-era screwball comedies. Actors from Marlon Brando and James Dean to Dustin Hoffman and Robert DeNiro, along with forward-thinking directors such as Elia Kazan and Martin Scorsese, introduced a more natural, less stagy form of acting to the film world.

It's almost impossible to name a film genre that didn't originate in Hollywood: the buddy picture, film noir (even if we needed the French to give it a name), the war movie, horror flicks (Thomas Edison himself produced the first film of *Frankenstein*). And of course the Western, which screams "America." As exemplified by directors such as John Ford, Sam Peckinpah, and Anthony Mann, Westerns are a part of this nation's soul. Whether it is the excitement of fulfilling Manifest Destiny found in *My Darling Clementine* or the struggle to do the right thing shown in *Shane* and *High Noon* there is something about the Western that has a special appeal to the American psyche. And maybe to the psyches of other nations as well.

Film also reflects the American values of democracy and free markets in a way no other art form does. Thomas Jefferson envisioned a democratic process in which common citizens educated themselves, talked to their fellows, and came to their own conclusions. This isn't always the case in politics, but it certainly is in regard to filmgoing. Millions of Americans read movie reviews, and just as many Americans ignore the critics. The opinions of our friends and family matter more to us than what some film-school graduate has to say—hence the power of word of mouth.

It's easy to get trapped in endless discussions of the artistic quality of individual films, of the bad taste of the general public, or the warped perspectives of some prominent critics. But let's not lose sight of the fact that movies are America's greatest artistic innovation—and no matter what dreck Hollywood may sometimes churn out, it's a contribution to the world we can be proud of.

Brandon Bosworth is a TAE *associate editor.*

Art For The Multitude

By Josh Larsen

Movies reflect nightmares. They envision dreams. They examine normal and abnormal lives. They do all this in an accessible way. Because they move everyday people in creative ways, movies sometimes end up being art in spite of themselves.

If movies are considered an American art form, it's not simply because the technology was born here, or because Hollywood is their capital. It's because they're a *popular*, democratic art. A doctorate in musicology isn't needed to engage a movie; a lecturer isn't required to tell us what to like about a film. The power is in our hands, because movies speak a universal language.

For fine art connoisseurs, this threatens to open the floodgates. That's why movies have the love of the multitude but the respect of only the few. Even critics who do respect the "cinema" have clearly defined rules as to what is and is not movie art. Anything that becomes too popular is suspect.

In movies, music is ripped from composition sheets; acting has leapt off the stage; painting is done with light rather than liquids. All of this is mashed up and mushed together—with a bastardized form of writing called a screenplay giving it shape

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—resulting in what defenders of the traditional fine arts can only regard as a mutt. Yet like most mutts, movies grow on you—so much so that they're the dominant art form of our age.

Admittedly, this is a rosy picture of the movies. No other art form lends itself so readily to exploitation and manipulation of its audience. Yet despite this, moving, meaningful visions do appear on the screen, making movies the most brash and relevant art most Americans will ever experience.

Josh Larsen reviews movies for TAE *in NOW PLAYING.*

Art or Not, Don't Forget How to Recognize Trash

By Cristopher Rapp

While thinking about whether movies are art, I came across a story about the latest exhibit by Damien Hirst, the ultra-hip British artist whose works include a 14-foot tiger shark floating in formaldehyde and a little charmer involving maggots and a severed cow's head.

According to a London newspaper, at a party celebrating a new show of his work last October, Hirst created a "sculpture" out of partygoers' garbage—beer bottles, soda cans, dirty ashtrays, candy wrappers, and the like. A discerning curator declared the piece worth £5,000. But someone forgot to tell the custodian. Later that night, not realizing the artistic value of the mess before him, he threw the whole thing away. The next day, the horrified gallery owners picked through the garbage cans to retrieve each piece of trash, then used a photograph taken at the party to reconstruct the work—making certain that each cigarette butt balanced against each crumpled napkin *just so.*

So, are movies art? Sure! In a Damien Hirst world, where the concept of art has been stretched so thin, why wouldn't they be? But this doesn't tell us very much.

For average-Joe moviegoers like me, the important questions remain: Was the movie expertly or at least interestingly directed and filmed? Are the performances believable? Is the film morally uplifting? Does it get at truths about the way we live, or ought to live? What are the implications, if any, of its depiction of violence, sex, historical events, and religious belief? And last, but by no means least, is it an entertaining way to spend a few hours? It isn't whether a movie is art that really concerns us, but whether it's good or bad, helpful or hurtful, enticing or off-putting.

Indeed, when controversies arise over the content of a film, the bade of "art" is often used as a way to dodge the thornier moral issues, the implication being that anything deemed "art" is exempt from criticism. It's a means of stifling discussion and clouding the fact that the First Amendment is a two-way street, applying to filmmakers and moviegoers alike.

Calling movies "art" shouldn't distract us from our most important task as we settle into a theater seat—which is being able to recognize a pile of trash when we see one.

Cristopher Rapp studies the art of law at the University of Virginia.

Universal Storytelling

By Jonathan Last

From the first time man scribbled on a cave wall, art has tried to tell stories. These stories are supposed to explore the human condition, and in the process affect, educate, and entertain the audience. As art grew from cave drawings to oil paintings, from oral recitation to novels, from ritual dances to classical ballet, the power to tell stories grew. Film gives artists an ability to create narratives more fully than any other medium.

That said, have you ever seen *Encino Man*? The 1992 Pauly Shore epic about a dude who unearths an iceman who then attends high school and becomes freakishly popular stands as a monument to the dictum that a powerful medium does not make powerful art. The problem with movies is that there is an army of Encino Men. Most films are either stupid, incompetently made, or both. For every *Magnolia* or *Godfather*, there are 50 clones of *Hard Rain.*

But the same can be said for the other arts. Take a walk through Barnes & Noble and try to calculate the ratio of good books to bad. Drive out to the local art expo this weekend and look at the acres of assembly-line water-color landscapes.

My friend Peter Berkowitz once said that film is important because it is the only art form followed by the full spectrum of American society. High-brow types have abandoned television, middle-brows have left opera and dance, and low-brow Americans don't go anywhere near the stage or literature. Yet from *New Yorker* editors to Wal-Mart clerks, from mud-wrestling fans to CEOs—we all occasionally go searching for a good movie. That's a hint of cinema's supremacy as a storytelling art.

Jonathan Last is the online editor of The Weekly Standard.

A Canvas For Good Painting and Bad

By Terry Teachout

Any passably bright person who goes to the movies regularly is likely to experience periodic despair. For me, the year just past was full of it. It wasn't merely that I saw a lot of bad movies, it was that I found myself wondering whether Hollywood had forgotten how to make good ones. Hope springs eternal in the breast of the chronic moviegoer, but as I write these words, I'm not at all sure I could draw up a Ten-Best-Films-of-2001 list consisting of movies I'd be willing to sit through a second time.

On the other hand, it's been a good *decade* for film. I sat down the other day and drew up a list of recent movies I'd enjoyed a lot, and was struck by its richness and variety. The last five years of the inaugural century of filmmaking brought us, among other things, *The Apostle, Being John Malkovich, Election, Ghost World, High Fidelity, L.A. Confidential, The Last Days of Disco, The Limey, Next Stop Wonderland, Panic, Pi, The Sixth Sense, Swingers, Three Kings,* and *You Can Count on Me*—and those are just the ones made in America. I saw all these films more than once, and they yielded up more riches on

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second and third viewings. For me, that's a pretty good definition of a work of art: The more you see of it, the more you see in it.

Are movies art? Most of them aren't, but many definitely qualify, and some are as good as the very best plays and novels. (I wouldn't hesitate, for instance, to put Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* up against any novel written in the twentieth century.) Way back in the early 1900s, Leo Tolstoy anticipated the potential of film as an art form. "This little clinking contraption with the revolving handle will make a revolution.... This swift change of scene, this blending of emotion and experience—it is much better than the heavy, long-drawn-out kind of writing to which we are accustomed. It is closer to life."

I myself wouldn't go so far as to say "much better." Potentially just as good, yes. Most movies are commercial junk, made to extract the largest possible amount of money from the largest possible number of teenagers. But, then, most art in general is junk—that's in the nature of things—and this is no less true of the arty "independent" films that get so much admiring press than of the big Hollywood studio ventures. It's true many of the recent movies I've liked were made on shoestring budgets, but they too were aimed at turning a profit. Very little great art has been created by artists who didn't give a damn about pleasing an audience.

Film, like a canvas or a piece of paper, is only as good or bad as what a living, breathing human being puts on it. I saw a lot of perfectly awful movies in 2001, but even while I was squirming in my seat it never occurred to me to conclude that movies aren't art. The poor ones are just *bad* art. A medium capable of giving us *Citizen Kane* or *The Searchers* or *Chinatown* doesn't have to apologize for *Pearl Harbor*.

Well, maybe just a little.

New York City arts critic Terry Teachout writes for publications ranging from the New York Times *to* National Review.

ENTERPRISING *continued from page 51*

nine symphonies of Sir Malcolm Arnold, a contemporary composer who is the best modern successor to Vaughn Williams, Bax, and Sir William Walton.

In the past two years, Naxos has begun extensive recordings of American music. For example, Meredith Willson is best known as the composer of *The Music Man*, but he also wrote two symphonies, available on one Naxos disc. Naxos has even unearthed the work of William Henry Fry, best known in music history as the composer who, in the 1850s, was the first to denounce the New York Philharmonic for playing music by foreigners rather than good old Americans such as himself. According to *New York Times* music critic Joseph Horovitz, Fry's "Santa Claus Symphony," recorded by Naxos, was "too bizarre" for the Philharmonic, but a great success at a more popular venue known as "Monster Concerts for the Masses," where the people enjoyed Fry's "programmatic cues...blatantly signaling a snowstorm, a perishing traveller, Santa's sleigh and the like."

At the other end of the spectrum, Naxos also finds a market for difficult avant-garde composers. The company is committed to recording all the compositions of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Britain's most eminent contemporary composer, and has even commissioned him to write ten string quartets. The company has sold 20,000 copies of a disc of the piano sonatas of Pierre Boulez, the well-known French conductor also known for his radical compositions.

Klaus Heymann told orgalt.com (a website for enthusiasts of organ music) that Boulez probably doesn't have tens of thousands of fans of his compositions, but buyers "may have recognized his name as a conductor, and thought, 'Well, that looks interesting,' and taken it. And they bring it home and play it and many will say, 'Oh my God! What is this!' and then it goes onto the shelf. But then, some will play it and think it sounds a bit strange, but they will try it again, and maybe get into it."

The Boulez story shows the secret of Naxos's success. Because buyers can get three Naxos discs for every one they purchase from a larger company, they don't feel cheated if one of the three discs contains music that is unappealing to them. And because Naxos discs are high-quality recordings that routinely win commendations from critics and music magazines around the world, buyers know they won't get junk.

Since Naxos is a privately held company, it's hard to gauge its success financially. But it seems to have between 15 and 20 percent of the classical music market in the U.S., Britain, and Scandinavia, with somewhat smaller shares in other European countries. Another sign of Naxos's financial health is that it has 200-300 projects in production at any one time.

Naxos's larger rivals have tried to compete with its mold-breaking formula. But these companies, burdened with overhead and expensive royalty agreements, can only offer comparable-priced discs from their limited backlists. Some orchestras have decided to produce their own discs at Naxos-style prices. In December 2000, for example, the London Symphony Orchestra began issuing its own recordings at [JO-substitute British pound sign before the 5] L5 a disc. Other orchestras are likely to follow, particularly if broadband technology becomes common enough that orchestras can easily download music directly onto the computer terminals of consumers.

But until that happens, Naxos has ambitious plans. They're continuing their efforts to record the complete works of most great composers, such as a 75-disc compilation of the piano compositions of Franz Liszt. They are expanding into operas, including producing some on DVDs. Naxos is also edging into audiobooks. And they still have plenty of obscure music to record. Coming up on the American Classics line, for example, is at least one composition by actor Lionel Barrymore.

Klaus Heymann's entrepreneurial vision has boldly demonstrated that it's quite possible for a company to greatly enrich our cultural life, while at the same time serving myriad consumers—and making a handsome profit.

TAE *associate editor Martin Wooster owns many of the discs discussed in this article.*

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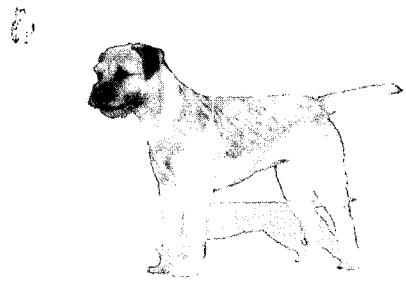
Gone to the Dogs



By Christine Parsons

DANVILLE, CALIFORNIA—Getting the dog was Michelle's idea. She is our youngest of three daughters and the only bleeding heart tree-hugger in our otherwise conservative family. When she developed her dog interest a few years ago at age nine, my husband and I went along with it simply because we were relieved to be done with gloomy subjects like rain forest depletion and the latest creature to qualify for endangered-species status. We encouraged her to purchase every dog volume Barnes & Noble offered, figuring a roomful of books on pups would be uplifting and surely as good as the real thing. Then one day she let it slip to Dr. Berman that she knew all about dogs.

Dr. Berman is the Mister Rogers of local pediatricians. He wears funky sweaters and has a soft twang like Fred.

"*Tell me*, Michelle," he asked, drawing his words out long and slow as he tapped her right knee with his reflex hammer. "What dogs do you know about?"

"Which group?" Michelle asked, swallowing hard and clearing her throat. "I mean, there's the Sporting Dogs, Hounds, Working Dogs, Terriers, Toys, Non-Sporting Dogs, Herding Dogs…"

Dr. Berman glanced over his shoulder at me, ever so pleased with the direction the conversation was taking.

"Wow, Michelle. I have a dog myself. He's a Springer Spaniel."

"Sporting Dog," she said, smiling from one dimpled cheek to the other.

Dr. Berman/Rogers gave me a wink and a nod and I left The Neighborhood with an unspoken understanding that the canine expert should have a dog.

Michelle spent weeks poring over her *American Kennel Club Complete Dog Book* in search of the right breed for a family with an allergic dad and an apathetic mom. Some sort of self-motivated, non-shedding dog was what we needed. She finally came to us with the picture of a Border Terrier.

"Isn't he cute?" It had the face of an otter and the body of a large rat.

A neighbor who owned the same type of dog gave me the name of a breeder on the East Coast who might have one we could adopt. The breeder, Mary Beth, did have a dog available but was reluctant to let it go to just anyone. The animal was already traumatized from a previous placement where there were other dogs in the house who were hard to get along with.

"She's a bitch," said Mary Beth.

I thought for a moment. The last thing I needed was a dog with an attitude.

"I don't know, Mary Beth…. We already have a couple of those in the house, if you know what I mean."

She sighed.

"Oh, then this may not work. This bitch needs to be top dog, which is why she came back to us from her first owner. They had three other bitches and it was a mess."

Oh. *That kind of bitch.*

My total lack of canine knowledge had Mary Beth worried. She began to ramble on about how a dog is a huge responsibility and not for everyone. To sidetrack her thoughts I changed the subject to food. What kind did she recommend for the…uh…bitch?

"A dog is just like a person," she explained, echoing a Michelle-ism. "It needs good nutrition."

I stared at the open box of Oreo Os cereal inches from the phone and nodded.

"That's so true," I responded.

She promised that if—a big if—we were accepted as the dog's new owners she would send me her recipe for Quick Canine Hash, a blend of whole-wheat couscous, beef chuck, and bone meal. I vowed to buy the freshest ground around, keep her dog safe from the pool, walk her every day, and anything else I could think of to get the pup into my daughter's hands. Mary Beth hesitated.

"These dogs rarely come back. I may just keep her. Kizzy's special."

"So is Michelle. She *needs*—what did you call her?"

"Her name is Kismet."

Kismet. The flesh on my arms tingled and I felt a wave of nausea. It was an *Oprah* moment. Could it be that I—a hard-hearted, gas-guzzling, watt-blowing Republican—was *meant* to have a warm fuzzy animal in my life?

"Your neighbor told me about Michelle," said Mary Beth, interrupting my thoughts. "I think she'll be good for Kizzy." She agreed to send Kismet via United Airlines. I told Michelle the news when she got home from school.

"Can't we get her *today*? And what the heck is a Kismet, anyway?"

"It's something that was meant to be…fate." I made a mental note to pick up a large bag of very dry dog food—hold the meat—at the supermarket.

Several weeks later we loaded the Suburban with Michelle's three cousins, a dog leash, plastic bags for poop, rags in case the dog threw up, and my sister Joni who already had a dog and would be the voice of reassurance.

"Geez, Tina. What if this dog is like… *Cujo*…remember that horror movie?"

She snarled and we both laughed. But

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what if the dog *was* monstrous? Should we leave it and run? Was Mary Beth chuckling back in Massachusetts, thrilled to be rid of the b-word?

We parked curbside. The kids raced ahead, crowding around the pick-up counter. Michelle dropped to her knees to peek inside a beige dog kennel. A pair of dark chocolate eyes met her blue ones.

"Oh, mom. Look at her. She *does* look like a Kismet."

She was petite and quiet and shaking all over. We put the leash on and took her out for a walk as the last of the evening's jets roared overhead. I kept thinking how strange life was, with a dog coming to us all the way from the other side of the country. It *did* seem to be…fate.

Kismet and I get along fine in spite of our opposing political philosophies. True to her liberal roots, she thinks she's entitled to *everything*: food, shelter, medical care, even walks along the Iron Horse Trail. Luckily she can't hear me listening to Rush Limbaugh on my headset radio as we stroll.

But it's Michelle who gives her all that gooey stuff like smooches and cuddles and a warm spot on her bed every night (the left side, of course). I peek in on them and the realization hits: Democrats, give them an inch and before you know it the whole house has gone to the dogs.

At-home mother of four Christine Parsons is writing a book about bringing back the family dinner.

Road Trips for God

By September Secrist

LACEY, WASHINGTON—Each summer, scores of young people from Faith Assembly Church fill their school vacations with activities that may not appeal to the average teenager. They take on difficult jobs, in hot climates, under unpleasant conditions. And often, they actually have to pay for the privilege of helping others. Yet every year they keep going back. Who are these folks anyway?

Would you believe, teenagers who have discovered that "'tis more blessed to give than to receive"? Teens who are actively trying to avoid selfishness and materialism, because their faith tells them God expects more of them. I know, because that's what my faith tells me.

"The flesh on my arms tingled. It was an Oprah moment."

My first trip with Faith Assembly was to volunteer with Gleanings for the Hungry in the San Joaquin valley of California. Gleanings receives contributions from local farmers of peaches and nectarines that are misshapen or discolored, and thus unsellable. The organization relies entirely on volunteers to process the donated fruit. To help with this, teens from Faith Assembly have, since 1986, endured a two-day drive down to central California in a school bus that rarely makes the trip without some mechanical mishap.

I went during my junior and senior high-school years, and can testify that the trip was often tedious and uncomfortable. Amanda Schaufler and Lisa McKenney always brought along a spray bottle to spritz their faces with cool water because there was no air conditioning on the bus. Six-foot-four Darren Montgomery always made sure to sit on the aisle—do you remember what legroom is like on school buses?

Our work started promptly at 7:30 a.m., despite our late arrival the evening before. We donned our old clothes and worked from dawn to dusk. We ran the machines that culled rotten fruit, turned each piece for accurate cutting, yanked out pits, and spread the fruit halves on pallets. The task of laying the sulfured fruit out in the field to dry usually fell on the men, who preferred the brawny, manual labor outside to the sometimes tedious activities inside the plant. By the end of the week, we had plenty of war wounds to show for our labors—cuts, scrapes, sliced fingertips, sunburns, and sore muscles we didn't even know existed. Books, magazines, and our imaginations were the only entertainment we had for ten days. We spent nights sleeping on cool church floors. Yet, despite the aches and discomfort, we couldn't wait to return the following summer.

One year, our church sent us to Mexico. Once again, we said goodbye to other potential summer jobs that could actually earn us money and instead boarded the non-air-conditioned school buses for a three-day journey to Mexico in the dead of summer. Upon arrival, we split into small groups. My brother Justin, a blossoming magician, joined a group working with children of the indigenous Mistaka Indian tribe. I joined Monica and Denise, a pair of inseparable sisters, to learn a drama we presented to youth and adults. The rest of the group helped build a house for the Fernandez family with funds we had raised.

From early in the morning to late at night we were on the go. We shared meals and activities with our hosts, and quickly built relationships. Pedro and Lupe Fernandez tearfully thanked us for their new house, where Pedro was able to recover from an injury without worry for his family's well being. Leaving the children of the community was difficult. I emptied my hair of its decorative clips, which became the proud possessions of many little girls.

Our church sponsors several trips every year. Sometimes we concentrate on projects in our home state or local vicinity, volunteering labor or expertise—teaching English, staffing crisis pregnancy centers, or working in daycare centers for low-income families. We also run Vacation Bible Schools offering crafts and recreation, storytelling and sing-alongs to grade-school children.

Faith Assembly of Lacey is one of many churches around the country that encourages teens to use their summer leisure time to serve their fellow citizens. In return, many young people are learning personal virtue, and building up the moral capital that is ultimately what makes a community flourish.

September Secrist is a former TAE *intern.*

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Hunker Down for the Long Haul

By Newt Gingrich

September 11 and the subsequent anthrax threats are much more profound than we have yet come to grips with psychologically. We were nearly paralyzed by a few envelopes containing anthrax. Imagine if we faced an opponent who had a large quantity of anthrax, such as the 2,300 gallons produced by Iraq, or nuclear capabilities. Imagine if there were 60,000 or 600,000 casualties instead of 6,000.

We have not fully realized how big the tragedy could be in the future. We must think of this fall's airplane and anthrax attacks as precursors to a heart attack. We have been warned. The question is how seriously we are going to take this warning.

We face three kinds of opponents in our war on terror, and they are substantially different. The first opponents are the dictators determined to obtain weapons of mass destruction, like Saddam Hussein. It is madness for us to wait until they *prove* they have the capability of using these weapons before we take action. We need determined strategies and rules that will not tolerate dictators acquiring weapons of mass destruction. The consequences are simply too enormous.

Second are the international terror organizations. Al-Qaeda is currently the poster child, but Hamas and Hezbollah and myriad other organizations are equally dangerous. The level of naivete about these terror organizations and where and how they operate is stunning.

Third, there is a medieval brand of Islam operating an estimated 11,000 schools, training young men in a set of skills—none of them marketable—guaranteeing they will be economically frustrated. They are told in advance that their frustration will be the fault of the West in general and America in particular. These young men are instructed that they will be morally justified in killing people if their frustration becomes too great. A system large enough to finance and sustain 11,000 schools—not counting mosques, radio stations, etc.—is *big*. We need a large counter-campaign appropriate to that size of opponent.

During the second World War and the Cold War we realized the importance of winning the cultural argument to achieve moral dominance. That is why Roosevelt and Churchill declared the Four Freedoms. That is why during the Cold War we emphasized a clear dichotomy between freedom and totalitarianism, between good and evil, and reached out across the planet to undergird our side.

We must win the moral campaign against terror. We are the ally of any Muslim who wants his family to live in peace, prosperity, and safety. We are with him against those who impose dictatorship, repress women, and exhibit deadly intolerance. That should be a fairly clear moral war. The long term fight is between two wings of Islam.

Various governments need to decide which team they are on. If the Saudis, for instance, decide they cannot be on our team, we should accept that as a sad reality and move on. We should not try to shape our policy around some diplomatic effort to build a collective guaranteed to be impotent by its very definition.

We must also fight on the social, political, and economic fronts. People in the refugee camps should already be wealthier, seven weeks after the United States engaged in this campaign. The people in the open Northern Alliance territories, where we could successfully be sending aid, should be wealthier. There should be a clear difference between being on the American side and being on the other side.

Last is the military campaign. Unless it is surrounded by moral purpose and appropriate political, economic, and social behaviors, the military will not get very far.

And at the same time we are replacing the Taliban, we should be replacing Saddam Hussein in Iraq as well. We have the power and the weight to do it. We have the will to do it. If we don't replace him, we will to fritter away this moment in history and end up a year or two from now having lost the momentum and the clarity, and we'll have set the stage for a deeper disaster.

There is no reason to be impatient. It took the United States from December 7, 1941 until June 1942 to win a major victory in WWII, and it would take the U.S. another five or six months to truly be on offense. The media is pressing for victory by Thanksgiving, as if anything later will be considered a failure. We need to be more deliberate, and mobilize for a lengthy battle.

We have a rare opportunity to define a world without terrorism, a world without weapons of mass destruction wielded by dictators, a world in which young Muslims can grow up and have a decent future. The cost of failure in this war would be historic, and it would be bitter.

Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich is an AEI *senior fellow. He delivered these remarks at the American Enterprise Institute's discussion on terrorism on October 29.*

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An Upstart Makes Money on High Culture

By Martin Morse Wooster

Most classical music recording companies these days suffer from falling sales and rising costs. Many of the once-great labels, such as RCA Red Seal, Deutsche Grammophon, and Decca, have dramatically cut back or even eliminated new record releases.

But one skyrocketing upstart shows that it's still possible to produce great classical records and make money. Naxos, a budget-priced line, produces nearly 200 new recordings every year. And while classical music lovers are ignoring highly promoted $20 discs from the major labels, they eagerly purchase Naxos's $6 albums, knowing that Naxos products are just as good as their higher-priced competitors—for a lot less money.

"The increasing success of Naxos," Britain's *Guardian* recently observed, "has given the big record companies plenty to think about. It has shown that the demand for budget-priced works is by no means confined to the most popular works, and that CD buyers are willing to explore the byways of the repertory when the cost of a disc is so low."

Naxos is a transnational company. It is based in Hong Kong, was founded by a German, and much of its staff is British.

The visionary who created Naxos is Klaus Heymann. Now 67, Heymann got into the recording business relatively late in his career. He began doing publicity for Max Braun AG, the appliance and electric-shaver manufacturer. During the Vietnam War, he moved to Hong Kong to head the branch office of an American weekly newspaper. After the war, Heymann became the Chinese and Hong Kong distributor for Revox tape recorders and Bose loudspeakers.

To promote his clients, Heymann began to organize concerts in Hong Kong sponsored by Revox and Bose in the 1970s. This led him into the world of classical music. He began to import records, and also joined the board of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, where he met—and married—orchestra violinist Takako Nishizaki.

Heymann then started a small record company, Marco Polo, to record esoteric compositions. But it was the introduction of the compact disc in the mid 1980s that made Heymann a major player in the classical music world. He saw that the big music companies were charging $20 for compact discs, while comparable LPs were sold for $6. If he could sell good compact discs for $6, he could make money.

So in 1987 Heymann launched Naxos. The name comes from Greek mythology; it is the island where Ariadne was abandoned by her lover Theseus after being seduced with music. Richard Strauss later made this legend into an opera.

From the start, Heymann made several strategic decisions which ensured that Naxos would succeed. Instead of hiring high-priced orchestras, he would use talented regional orchestras and rising young stars. (Initially, he relied heavily on high-quality but low-profile Eastern European orchestras.) And while the major companies were locked into expensive, long-term royalty agreements with major orchestras, Naxos paid its orchestras only for specific recordings, helping to keep costs down.

And because Naxos does not hire stars, it doesn't have to shell out money for advertising, hype, or perks needed to avoid temper tantrums from prima donnas. "No money is wasted on unnecessary expenses such as large delegations of hangers-on at recording sessions and expensive artist promotions," says a statement on the naxos.com Web site. "Naxos artists do not get famous through glossy brochures and full-color advertisements in the international press, but by producing first-class recordings which sell in large quantities throughout the world."

Naxos's thrift extends to its American offices. Instead of buying high-priced space in Manhattan or Hollywood, Naxos of America is located in Nashville, where the company found reasonable rent with an abundance of skilled freelance recording engineers and other technical people who normally work on country and contemporary Christian albums. Naxos has also contracted with the Nashville Symphony to record several albums.

Another Naxos policy is that, with rare exceptions, it only records a composition once. This enables the company to continually extend its catalog and avoid duplication. Thus, instead of having several versions of Beethoven's symphonies competing against each other in the market, Naxos uses its time and energy to record fine but obscure compositions by Beethoven's contemporaries that don't currently have good modern recordings. (For very obscure recordings, Naxos retains its full-priced Marco Polo line.)

Thus the Naxos catalogue is a treasure trove for fans of particular styles willing to take a $6 gamble on an unfamiliar composer. Say you like late-romantic British composers. A big music company might only stock the symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Naxos is happy to sell you the six symphonies of Vaughan Williams's neglected contemporary, Sir Arnold Bax. Then it can sell you the

continued on page 47

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Flashback

To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child—Cicero

A President, His Paperboy & the Socialist

Once upon a time, before the American small town had been reduced to a quaint prop in beer and truck commercials, its residents possessed a common understanding and mutual sympathy so strong as to overcome differences like those that separate hawk from dove, lefty from righty, even President of the United States from leader of the Socialist Party.

The Socialist, in this case, was Eugene V. Debs, the radical Railway Union leader from Terre Haute, Indiana. During the First World War, Debs told a Canton, Ohio, audience, "The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles." After sardonically noting that "it is extremely dangerous to exercise the Constitutional right of free speech in a country fighting to make democracy safe in the world," Debs defiantly proclaimed, "I would a thousand times rather be a free soul in jail than to be a sycophant and coward in the streets."

He got his wish. Convicted of violating Woodrow Wilson's Espionage and Sedition Acts, Eugene V. Debs became the most celebrated of the 15,000 Americans whom even Wilson called "political prisoners." Debs was confined to the federal prison at Atlanta; in 1920, he ran for President from his cell and won almost 1 million votes, many from decidedly bourgeois non-socialists who admired his courage. (H.L. Mencken, after mocking Debs for "his naive belief in the Marxian rumble-bumble," praised him as "fair, polite, independent, brave, honest, and a gentleman.")

President Wilson, a Princeton intellectual, was vindictive in the manner typical of the theory class. "This man was a traitor to his country and he will never be pardoned during my administration," Wilson said of Debs. Chimed in the *New York Times*: "He is where he belongs. He should stay there."

Wilson's successor was Warren Harding, the affable owner of Ohio's *Marion Star*. Harding lacked Wilson's intellect as well as his mean streak. The kindly Buckeye asked his venal Attorney General Harry Daugherty to meet with Debs in March 1921, so the prisoner was shipped northward on a train to Washington, where he met with Daugherty and Harding gofer Jess Smith.

These Doublemint twins of GOP corruption were charmed by Debs. Although Daugherty opposed a pardon, he pronounced the Socialist "sincere, gentle, and tender," and the solicitous Smith even ran into a drugstore to buy a bundle of quill toothpicks for Debs after the prisoner complained of jailhouse plaque.

Among those pleading Debs' case was his Socialist Party heir, Norman Thomas, who by extraordinary coincidence had once been a dollar-a-week paperboy delivering Harding's *Star*. Thomas, who regarded the President as a genial Babbitt, "a fine small-town or city booster," visited Harding twice in the White House. The homeboys reminisced about good old Marion before Thomas asked, "Is it not a splendid thing that a country should have men brave enough to speak their minds even when they are in a minority?" Harding agreed.

He intended to release Debs on July 4, but the American Legion protested so vociferously that he delayed the pardon from the anniversary of American liberty to the season of Christian charity. Harding released Debs on Christmas Eve 1921, saying, "I want him to eat his Christmas dinner with his wife."

In an oddly Middle American way, they had known each other all their lives, though they'd never met.

The labor leader prepared to go home—not to a Washington, D.C. castle built upon union dues, but to his pretty house in Terre Haute. At Harding's request, Debs dropped by the White House on December 26. When the radical was ushered into the President's office, Harding sprang from his chair, stuck out his hand, and said, "Well, I have heard so damned much about you, Mr. Debs, that now I am very glad to meet you personally."

They chatted amiably, comfortably, in the way that a man who is esteemed in Marion can get on with a man who is esteemed in Terre Haute. In an oddly Middle American way, they had known each other all their lives, though they'd never met.

Debs later told reporters: "Mr. Harding appears to me to be a kind gentleman, one whom I believe possesses humane impulses. We understand each other perfectly. As for the White House —well, gentlemen, my personal preference is to live privately as a humble citizen in my cottage at Terre Haute."

And so the two Americans parted, the Socialist and the Republican, in perfect understanding.

—Bill Kauffman

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Kids Get Hollywood's Best Stuff

Courtesy of Pixar

Who gets the most respect from Hollywood today?

After taking a look back at 2001, you could easily argue that it's young children. The ratio of quality films to clutter hasn't been good for adults—we faced the usual high chances of being ripped off or insulted rather than entertained when we ventured into movie theaters this past year.

The options for small children were much brighter. *Spy Kids* got things off to a boisterous start last spring, followed by summer's *Shrek*, and the positive trend has continued with the recent releases of *Monsters, Inc.* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. In short, there's been more reason than usual of late to envy youth.

It's no wonder that children's films have been so accomplished this year, considering the talent level involved. The eminently enjoyable, G-rated *Monsters* is the latest creation of Pixar Animation Studios, arguably the best movie production company working right now. Pixar concentrates exclusively on computer-animated kids' movies, a field the studio perfected with *A Bug's Life, Toy Story,* and *Toy Story 2*. Each of those movies looks at the world through the innocent, imaginative eyes of a child, a feat pulled off once again in *Monsters, Inc.*, which follows an inquisitive little girl who manages to tame the scary creatures in her bedroom closet. Melding ingenious storytelling with stunning technological prowess, Pixar's pictures are fast becoming fairy tales for a new generation.

Even so, Pixar doesn't have a stranglehold on the kids' flick business, a fact that became clear with the arrival of DreamWorks Pictures' computer-animated *Shrek*. Matching Pixar in visual and narrative wit, DreamWorks demonstrated itself to be a formidable competitor with this spoof of and homage to classic make-believe stories. And that's good news for fans of computer-animated storytelling, since we'll be the main beneficiaries as these two studios try to outdo each other.

It's not only top production talent—kids have also been getting top material. In addition to the William Steig children's book that inspired *Shrek*, film studios have, of course, adapted J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, the biggest phenomenon in children's literature in years. The story of an 11-year-old boy who discovers he's a wizard and goes off to learn his trade at a magical boarding school, the Harry Potter books—what with their floating candles and flying brooms—are tailor-made for the movies.

Who would have guessed, however, that the filmmakers behind *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* would have brought Rowling's first book to the screen so intact? Nearly everything is here, from the Sorting Hat to the Quidditch match, even if the result is a commercially risky running time of two and a half hours.

What this points to, more than anything else, is a respect the filmmakers have for the young readers in their target audience (something that clearly wasn't shown last year when *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas* butchered the work of Theodor S. Geisel). Rowling's book is treated as a defining classic here, because that's exactly what kids think of it. Meanwhile, we adults have our classics—Shakespeare, for example—routinely massacred by the movies.

An even more heartening facet of the best children's movies this year was that they refused to insult the intelligence of their viewers, often bypassing the easy laughs that can be had by wallowing in bathroom gags in favor of a sharper, smarter humor. Nowhere was this more clear than in *Shrek*. (Yes, there were a few flatulence jokes in the film, but if an ogre can't be a bit gross, who can?) The very premise of the movie—that all fairy tale creatures have been banished to the title ogre's swamp until he rescues a princess from a dragon—assumes that children are well-read enough to catch the connections to traditional bedtime stories. Thus the giggles that erupt when Shrek finds the big bad wolf in his bed.

The best of these films, of course, have more than giggles. *Monsters, Inc.* is a potent, timely parable about confronting one's fears, real and imagined, while *Shrek*, in which an ogre and a princess strike up an unlikely romance, turns the conventional Hollywood notion of beauty on its head. Yes, these are familiar, old-fashioned ideals, but they're imaginatively presented.

And goodness knows Hollywood usually doesn't bother including morals of any sort in the dregs they serve up to us grownups.

—Josh Larsen

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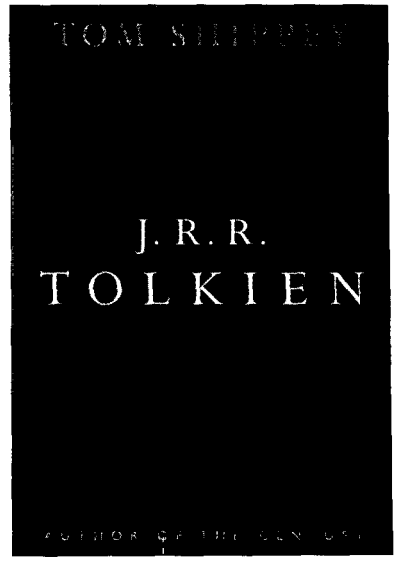
BookTalk



THE MASTER OF MIDDLE-EARTH

By Martin Morse Wooster

J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century
By Tom Shippey
Houghton Mifflin, 347 pages, $26

Ask a typical literary critic to name the most important novel of the twentieth century, and he might cite a gloomy German tome such as Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* or Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities.* But as Tom Shippey demonstrates, the honor belongs to J. R. R. Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings.*

Shippey is a crisp, forceful, and intelligent writer who has produced a highly readable appreciation of Tolkien's life and art. *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* is the ideal companion for readers enchanted by Tolkien's novels who want to learn more about his ideas.

Tolkien's writings are, of course, best sellers; his most important work, *The Lord of the Rings*, has sold 50 million copies, *The Hobbit* 40 million. It's these substantial sales that ensured Hollywood's willingness to finance three new movies based on the trilogy. Moreover, Tolkien is one of the few writers who created his own category of fiction. Walk into any bookstore, and you'll find a fantasy section where most of the bad books (and a few good ones) show his influence.

High-minded *littérateurs* sneer at Tolkien's readers for wasting time reading trash. But as Shippey, an expatriate Brit who teaches English at Saint Louis University, shows, Tolkien was neither a hack nor a fool; he was a master of English prose who largely succeeded in his goal of creating a great epic.

The key to understanding Tolkien, Shippey believes, lies in his background as a philologist—a scholar who studies language. Tolkien spent his professional career analyzing Old English epics. As he wrote in a 1955 letter to his American publishers, "a primary fact about my work, is that it is all of a piece, and *fundamentally linguistic* in inspiration." Tolkien thought that by delving deeply enough into a piece of medieval writing, you could peel back the centuries and return to the springtime of a culture, recreating long-suppressed myths that only survive in garbled fragments. He believed his mission was similar to that of the Brothers Grimm, who reconstructed German fairy tales, or the Finnish scholar Elias Lönnrot, who produced a "restored" edition of the national epic *The Kalevala* by collecting fragments of earlier myths and using them as a basis for his own poetry.

A lesser writer with Tolkien's ambitions might have produced an unreadable tome. But because of his mastery of English prose, *The Lord of the Rings* was a new kind of novel. Some of the characters perform heroic deeds that transcend ordinary life. Yet others (including most of the hobbits) are lower-class characters who would be happier in their comfortable burrows than engaging in valiant adventures. Because Tolkien easily combined characters who act in strikingly modern ways with more mythic characters, Shippey explains, he got "under the guard of the modern reader, trained to reject, or to ironize, the assumptions of tragedy or epic."

Tolkien also used his formidable ability with language to incorporate many of the grim parts of twentieth-century life into his work. As a veteran of World War I, severely wounded in the Battle of the Somme, Tolkien saw most of his friends die in the slaughter of trench warfare. He knew that war produced more tragedy than triumph, and Shippey believes that Tolkien's combat experience helped forge the grim majesty of *The Lord of the Rings.* While Tolkien insisted his novel was not allegorical, Shippey finds some similarity between contemporary events and Tolkien's tale. The ring, for example, is somewhat similar to the atomic bomb; both are weapons too terrible to use.

Tolkien's mission was similar to that of the Brothers Grimm, who reconstructed German fairy tales.

Tolkien spent nearly 15 years writing *The Lord of the Rings.* Tom Shippey decisively demonstrates that Tolkien's exhaustive effort produced one of the few twentieth-century novels likely to endure. Those who read Tolkien are not wasting their time; they choose heroism and virtue over the nihilism and skepticism clouding the minds and works of most leading authors of the last century.

TAE *associate editor Martin Morse Wooster reviews science fiction and fantasy for the* Washington Post *and other publications.*

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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

By Bruce Ramsey

The Business of America
By John Steele Gordon
Walker & Co., 285 pages, $27

Business writing has long been clotted with morality plays of arrogant tycoons and monopolistic corporations. Businessmen have created our tools, anti-businessmen our tales. John Steele Gordon attempts to correct this imbalance in *The Business of America*, a sympathetic collection of American capitalism's emblematic stories.

The book has 47 of these, each five pages long. Some are of triumph, some of defeat. Henry Ford, having succeeded with the Model T, failed with the Fordson tractor because he didn't understand farmers. Sewell Avery saved Montgomery Ward by being rightly pessimistic in 1930; he lost out to Sears Roebuck by being wrongly pessimistic in 1945. Here, too, is the story of Sears Roebuck, which, by Gordon's account ought to have been called Sears Rosenwald.

Despite their brevity, Gordon's tales are leisurely. He introduces health nut Sylvester Graham, the inventor of the Graham Cracker, by quoting the Bible on the virtues of wine. He begins his story of nineteenth-century California banker D. O. Mills by talking about Steve Jobs.

Many of Gordon's stories flesh out an idea. He presents J. Paul Getty's pithy explanation of his success—"I seen my opportunities and I took 'em"—and illustrates it with a story on onion farmers. Declaring that victory in war goes to the side that mobilizes wealth, Gordon tells the story of Jay Cooke, the financier who created the world's first war-bond drive to fund the Union army.

Another chapter proclaims, "Politicians don't really make economic decisions; they make political ones," and tells of two New York boondoggles: the Erie Railroad and the World Trade Center. Written before the September 11 terrorist attack, Gordon sees the Twin Towers not as shining symbols of American capitalism, but as a show-off project of Governor Nelson Rockefeller, built by the public Port Authority and run at a loss for more than 20 years.

Some government projects do pay off. Gordon explains the rise of New York City through the success of the Erie Canal. It is an exception, though; on the whole, he sees governments as "nothing more than very large committees."

Several stories turn anti-business icons on their heads. During the armor-plate scandal of 1893, the Cleveland administration thought Andrew Carnegie was cheating on shipments of battleship armor. By Gordon's account, there was no cheating; the plates were difficult to fabricate, and most of them exceeded the government's standard. The government believed otherwise, and decided to build its own armor-plate plant in World War I. It wasn't ready until three years after the war had ended, and its costs were almost double that of private industry.

Two of Gordon's chapters take on quotations beloved by socialists: "The public be damned," and "What is good for General Motors is good for the country." The second quotation is false, Gordon explains. Charlie Wilson was asked at his confirmation hearing what he would do if faced with a case in which the interests of the country were adverse to the interests of General Motors. He quite sensibly replied: "I cannot conceive of one because for years, I thought what was good for our country was good for General Motors, and vice versa." Gordon relates three separate accounts of Cornelius Vanderbilt's statement, "The public be damned" to explain what he was getting at: He was running a business, so serving the public good was not an adequate excuse for running a loss.

Gordon is impressed by results, not intentions. He has few kind words for the Freedmen's Bank, a federally chartered effort to lift up former slaves. Run as a venture to do good, it collapsed, taking the deposits of thousands of blacks with it. It was for business reasons that the Cadillac division of General Motors began marketing to blacks. In the 1920s, Cadillac sold to whites only, to maintain an exclusive image. When the Depression hit, the division was on the ropes, and executive Nicholas Dreystadt realized the black elite—singers, boxers, doctors, and lawyers—had been paying white front men to buy their Cadillacs. Dreystadt decided that selling to black Americans was good business.

Gordon shows that anti-business quotations beloved by socialists turn out to be spurious.

Gordon rarely strays into the world of the should-have-been. An exception is his piece on the Interstate Commerce Commission, where he argues that the nation's first regulatory agency—set up to control railroad rates—was a mistake. Most of the time, Gordon is a storyteller.

Most of his stories are a century or more old, and at least one reviewer has grumbled there are more steamboats and sewing machines in this book than memory chips. Don't let that put you off. Early America was a rough-and-tumble place, not so different in spirit from today's entrepreneurial economy. These stories will have a familiar ring to those who conduct the business of America.

Bruce Ramsey is an editorial writer at the Seattle Times.

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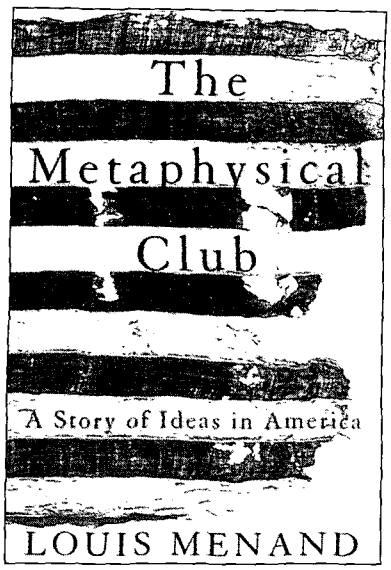

PRINCIPLE OVER PRAGMATISM

By Peter Augustine Lawler

The Metaphysical Club
By Louis Menand
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 546 pages, $27

The Metaphysical Club is an intellectual history of the lives and thoughts of the individuals who comprised the late-nineteenth-century intellectual movement known as pragmatism, a forerunner of modern liberalism. The original Metaphysical Club was a group of talented young men of distinguished lineage, with the benefits of a Harvard education, who met regularly to hold philosophical discussions. The most noteworthy among them were C. S. Peirce, William James, and Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. The club's name was ironic; the discussions were resolutely agnostic and anti-metaphysical. The aim of these men was to purge fixed conceptions of God, nature, and truth from American thought.

The club first met in January 1872. Menand reminds us that the Civil War was as traumatizing for the young men of the North as World War I was for the young men of Europe. Before the war, there was a strong abolitionist streak in the educated families of New England, and club members shared this idealism. Slavery was a moral evil over which compromise was contemptible. The principles with which slavery was condemned were those of the Declaration of Independence and Christianity—the idea that all men are created equal and possess natural, inalienable rights.

The pragmatists thought these firm principles produced horrible results. Holmes, in particular, was shaped by his experiences in battle. He was wounded three times and witnessed seemingly senseless slaughter. "The lesson Holmes took from the war," according to Menand, was that "certitude leads to violence." And so pragmatism began in Cambridge as "a mature debunking of the philosophical and scientific certitudes that had failed to prevent—in some cases even incited—four years of mutual destruction." That debunking was compatible with emerging Darwinian theories about the uncertain, mutable, and survivalist character of all life. But what came first, Menand suggests, is reflection on the war. The pragmatic definition of truth is what works for the survival and flourishing of a certain kind of organism. So, principles that lead to civil war cannot possibly be true.

In the eyes of the pragmatists, dogmatism produced America's fanatical war over slavery. The pragmatists thus rejected the doctrine of rights rooted in nature. They are often praised by today's liberals for opposing absolute rights of property. But the same liberals forget that the same principles led the pragmatists to be much more tolerant of slavery than President Lincoln was. Menand concludes—banally—that pragmatism is all about tolerance. But he shows that some pragmatists, such as Justice Holmes, were far too promiscuous about what they tolerated. Tolerance unregulated by true principle easily becomes callous indifference to injustice, immorality, and human suffering.

As he enters the era of the Civil Rights movement and the Cold War, Menand doesn't take the time to articulate the United States' principled differences with the Soviet Union, suspecting they were overrated. But he admits that combating the USSR required Americans to stand for something higher than their own survival, and pragmatism did not provide such a standard. America's founding certainty about rights returned during our struggle with communism to animate our resistance to the undeniable evil of murderous totalitarian regimes. Likewise, Martin Luther King Jr. revived the Biblical and Founding understandings of individual rights, speaking with certainty about right and wrong in a way that would be alien to pragmatism.

The truth is, as the anti-communist dissident Solzhenitsyn observed, over the long term it is impossible for a people to live in freedom and dignity, or even to survive, unless they resist pragmatism. Human beings were surely given, by God and nature, the responsibility to live well in light of the truth. Pragmatism, most radically, is a fearful, if often well-intentioned, denial of what we know to be true. It is certainly not what the original pragmatists claimed it to be—a courageous affirmation of human reality.

Peter Augustine Lawler teaches government at Berry College in Georgia and is author of Postmodernism Rightly Understood: The Return to Realism in American Thought.

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Edited by Martin Morse Wooster

the Digest

Summaries of important new research from the nation's universities, think tanks, and investigative publications

POLITICS

Put Judges Above the State

Paul Mahoney, "The Common Law and Economic Growth: Hayek Might be Right," in *The Journal of Legal Studies* (June 2001), University of Chicago Press, Post Office Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637

Most nations use one of two systems to shape their laws. In the British "common law" tradition, judges are high ranking, well paid, and able to make decisions that change the law. Common law nations also allow upper-echelon judges to overturn the decisions of lower courts. By contrast, in the French "civil law" system, judges are lowly functionaries who enforce the laws prepared by bureaucrats, and whose decisions cannot be questioned or appealed.

Paul Mahoney of the University of Virginia School of Law finds that countries with common law grow faster economically than countries where civil law is the rule. This leads him to agree with Friedrich Hayek's observation in *Law, Legislation, and Liberty* that "the ideal of individual liberty seems to have flourished chiefly among people where, at least for long periods, judge-made law predominated."

The British and French legal systems both evolved from battles between crown and parliament over private property. In the seventeenth century, King James I and King Charles I tried to establish state-controlled monopolies and force merchants to loan the state money. English judges resisted these arbitrary expansions of government power, and such legal experts of the time as James Harrington, John Locke, and Sir Edward Coke "championed the rule of law as a superior organizational principle to royal absolutism."

In France, on the other hand, judges sided with the monarchy. Thus when legal codes were revised after the French Revolution of 1789, judges lost of most of their powers. The revolutionary legal code's chief drafter, P. A. Fenet, explained that, in the new France, the only basis for a judge's decision was "the mysterious and variable interests of the State."

This turned out to be bad for private enterprise. Having strong, independent judges protected from politics, Mahoney finds, "produces improvements in property rights and contract enforcement that in turn speed economic growth."

Politics and the IRS

Marilyn Young, Michael Rekuslak, and William Shughart, "The Political Economy of the IRS," in *Economics & Politics* (July 2001), Blackwell Publishers, 350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148

The Internal Revenue Service claims that it enforces our tax laws fairly. But business school professors Marilyn Young, Michael Rekuslak, and William Shughart uncover evidence that politics seems to come into play.

Comparing IRS auditing data from 1991 to 1997, they find that "The percentage of tax returns audited by the IRS is markedly lower in states that are important to the sitting President's re-election aspirations." They also investigated whether living in a congressional district or state with a member who sits on a committee that oversees the IRS affected one's chances of being audited. The three economists find that citizens with representatives who sit on committees that deal with the IRS also received fewer unwelcome calls from the tax collection agency.

These variations in IRS audit rates, the authors conclude, definitively show "evidence of politicization of the IRS."

Multiculturalism Damages Liberalism

Thomas F. Powers, "The Transformation of Liberalism, 1964 to 2001," in *The Public Interest* (Fall 2001), 1112 Sixteenth Street, N.W., #530, Washington, D.C. 20036

Multiculturalism, contends University of Minnesota (Duluth) political scientist Thomas Powers, is at its heart an attempt to change the rules by which American democracy has been conducted over the past two centuries. Among the dramatic changes advocates seek are these:

• *Policing opinion.* Liberals traditionally believed that the state could regulate behavior but not ideas. They thought that judges could regulate actions but not opinions, and approved of Thomas Jefferson's notion that "it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are 20 gods or no

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gods. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg." Multiculturalists, on the other hand, believe that ideas they deem racist or sexist have to be regulated—and ultimately eliminated.

• *Having government enforce group relations.* Multiculturalists contend the suffering of blacks and women primarily results from a lack of "respect," and that it is the paramount duty of the state to oversee the ways in which members of different groups interact with each other. Relations must be monitored constantly to ensure equal status between all groups.

• *Dominance of faction politics.* In *Federalist* 10, James Madison warned against the rise of interest groups (what he called "factions") in American political life. For multiculturalists, though, the group you're in determines your fate. They believe, moreover, that group membership is "ascriptive"—you can't opt out of ethnic identity even if you want to. The state, in the multiculturalist view, must constantly act to give favors to some groups and punish others.

Both liberals and conservatives, Powers believes, underestimate the ways in which multiculturalism undermines democratic traditions. Anti-discrimination laws that limit or eliminate traditions of free speech and tolerance, Powers concludes, conflict with "nothing less than the ultimate self-understanding of American democracy. The choice between supremacy of liberty and the justice of anti-discrimination is a difficult one to make."

SOCIETY

When Juries Send Messages

Mark Curriden, "Power of 12," in *ABA Journal* (August 2001), American Bar Association, 750 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611

In January 2000, a jury in Delray Beach, Florida found Humana, a health-maintenance organization, guilty of failing to provide adequate care to a nine-year-old who died from symptoms of cerebral palsy. The angry jury awarded the child's family $79.6 million (an amount that's being appealed). "We decided we had to send a message that would get not only Humana's attention but the attention of every HMO out there," says juror Diane Leininger.

The Florida case, says Mark Curriden, a reporter for the *Dallas Morning News*, is not unusual. In the past few years, tobacco companies, drug companies, gun manufacturers, the Catholic Church, and other companies and organizations have been socked with enormous judgments from juries eager to punish. "Today's jurors come to court angry and full of biases, and they are exacting revenge," declares American Tort Reform Association general counsel Victor Schwartz.

The first modern instance of a jury "sending a message" came in 1962, when television and radio commentator John Henry Faulk sued Aware, Inc., a group that accused Faulk of being a communist sympathizer. Faulk sued, and won $3.5 million, the largest jury settlement up to that time.

But most juries stayed relatively moderate in their actions until 1982, when Texas trial lawyer Scottie Baldwin won a $1 million lawsuit against asbestos makers Johns-Manville and Raybestos-Manhattan for his lung-diseased client. This case paved the way for class-action lawsuits where trial lawyers routinely persuade juries to punish large companies with massive judgments. A *Dallas Morning News/Southern Methodist University Law Review* study found that the number of cases where juries "stated publicly that they intended their verdicts to go beyond their individual cases" rose from 17 between 1900 and 1970, to 100 between 1970 and 1990, and then to 700 in just the decade from 1990 to 2000. In another survey, the *Morning News* and *SMU Law Review* found that 40 percent of 594 district judges had experienced a jury using its verdict "to send a broader political and social message." And 32 percent had had a jury ask to read a proclamation about why they made their decision.

Juries are also increasingly willing to use their powers to nullify laws they don't like. In the mid 1990s, for example, Atlanta jurors began to acquit sports bookies, stating that Georgia could not simultaneously punish bookies and run a state lottery. Dallas jurors, likewise, often acquit exotic dancers who come closer to patrons than the law allows. The survey of district judges found that 34 percent of them had presided over a case of jury nullification of minor or major import.

"Like no time before," Curriden reports, jurors "regularly demonstrate an increasing willingness—even a clamoring—to force basic American institutions...to change the way they operate."

OTHER COUNTRIES

Beware of Mountain People With Guns

S. Frederick Starr, "Altitude Sickness: Poverty and Violence in the Mountains," in *The National Interest* (Fall 2001), 1112 Sixteenth Street, N.W., #540, Washington, D.C. 20036

What do the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Shining Path in Peru, and the Zapatistas in Mexico all have in common? They're all mountain people in revolt against civilization. S. Frederick Starr of Johns Hopkins warns that a "disproportionate number of the world's bloodiest zones of conflict today are in mountain regions."

One-sixth of the world lives in mountainous areas, and these regions are among the world's poorest areas. Construct a chart of areas where the average wage is less than a dollar a day and you'll encircle most of the world's mountain people. Mountain people tend to have less education, poorer roads, little or no rail service, and no air transportation. The few goods available from traders are usually expensive, which increases indebtedness and resentment against lowland neighbors.

What's the best way to deal with rebellious mountaineers? Mountaineers have historically been able to defend their own territories against aggressors. "Any government that thinks that it can bludgeon mountain people into submission," Starr writes, "is engaging in a most destructive form of self deception."

Ultimately the only way to make mountain people peaceable is to make them richer. But here foundations and

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international aid agencies should avoid "grandomania"—the desire to impose a one-size-fits-all solution from outside. Most such solutions waste money and leave mountain people as poor as ever. Far better, Starr argues, to discover local entrepreneurs who know what poor people need and then support them. He commends the international Muslim leader, the Aga Khan, whose development network has helped poor people in Pakistan and Tajikistan establish schools, small enterprises, and self-sufficient farms. The Aga Khan also signed an agreement with the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in 2000 to establish the University of Central Asia, the region's first college.

If donors can help mountain people to help themselves, Starr concludes, eventually "the world's mountain territories will cease to be regions of despair and conflict."

Is China a Paper Tiger?

Gordon Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China*, Random House, 299 Park Avenue, New York, New York, 10171

China appears to be on the verge of becoming an economic powerhouse. But Gordon Chang, a lawyer with extensive experience in China, contends that this is a mirage. Actually, he suggests, China is on the verge of economic collapse. "Today, China is halfway to somewhere with no consensus as to the future," he writes. "It is suffering from the pain of a transition partially completed, yet at the same time it does not enjoy most of the benefits of modernization."

Despite the economic reforms implemented by Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, China remains a communist nation. Economists still devise five-year plans (the Tenth Five-Year Plan will run through 2003) that are ratified at Communist Party Congresses. At least 240,000 Chinese are professional Marxists.

All these ideologists and party officials have to find work somewhere, and they are likely to work in a state-owned enterprise or SOE. SOEs are at the core of today's Chinese economy; officially, the Chinese Communist Party is "the Party of Public Assets"—the "public assets" being SOEs. Some of these SOEs are huge; China Petrochemical (Sinopec) has over a million employees, while its chief rival, China National Petroleum Corp. has a payroll of 1.5 million people.

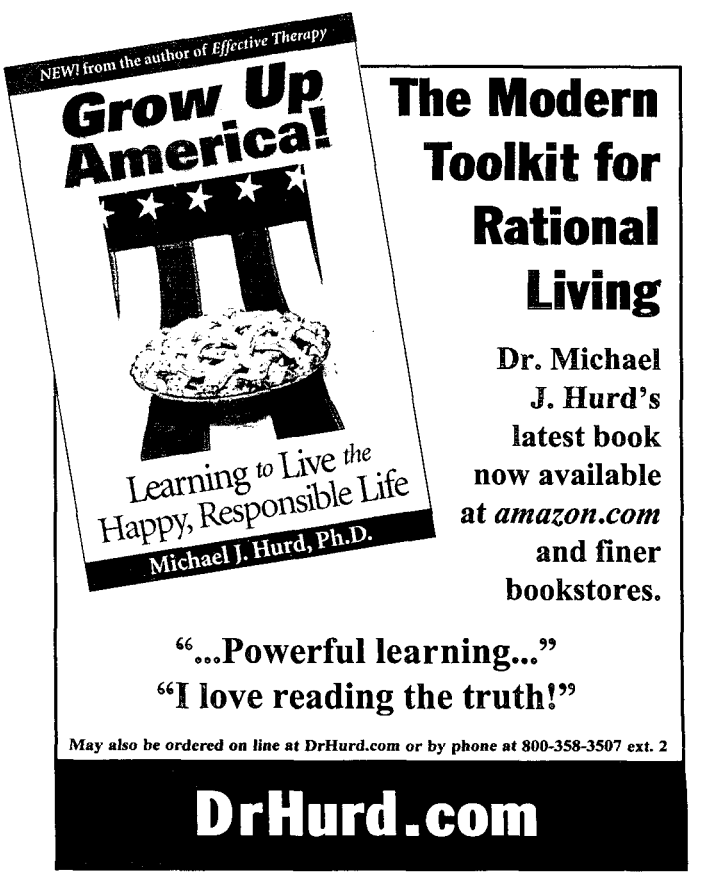
Official Chinese statistics claim that SOEs are profitable. But these statistics don't account for government subsidies. In 1998, SOEs allegedly made a profit of $5.9 billion, but that was only after government subsidies amounting to $18.1 billion. The losses may well be larger, but accounting practices are foggy. A 1999 study from the Ministry of Finance found that 89 percent of SOE corporate books were faked. Chinese government studies charge that as much as $60 billion in equipment in SOEs is unused, and that 30 percent of SOE employees do nothing productive.

China's state-owned banks are in trouble because of SOEs. The Chinese are among the world's greatest savers, putting as much as 40 percent of their income into banks. But the banks take this capital (which, in 1999, was $720 billion) and then squander it on loans to SOEs and other dubious ventures. According to Standard & Poor's, as much as 70 percent of the assets of Chinese banks are non-performing loans.

Chang foresees several ways Chinese communism could collapse. China could launch a war to conquer Taiwan, which the inept, war-averse People's Liberation Army would probably lose. This could lead to a second march for democracy on Tiananmen Square—which the police would not suppress. A second possibility would be a massive stock manipulation scandal that could lead to an economic depression. Since about 30 percent of Chinese stocks, according to Chang, are currently being manipulated, the likelihood of a Chinese depression is quite high.

Outsiders, Chang concludes, should not assume that China's tyrants can repress democracy and capitalism forever. "Central government leaders do not know what to do as the institutions built over five decades become feeble," he writes. "Social order in their nation is dissolving. The Chinese are making a break for the future, and the disaffected are beginning to find their voice."

We welcome submissions of reports, articles, or papers you think should be summarized in THE DIGEST. Please send to P.O. Box 8093, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907.



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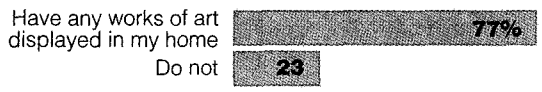
Opinion Pulse

Edited by Karlyn Bowman

Good Art, Bad Art

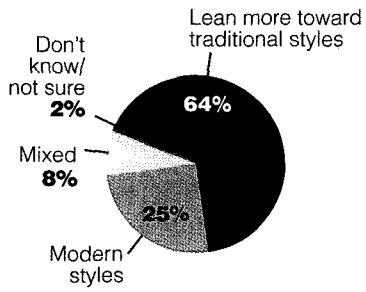
In 1978 , two Russian artists, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, emigrated to the United States. They continued their artistic work, and, in 1993, embarked on an unusual project. They surveyed Americans about their tastes in art and then created a painting based on the poll's results. Eventually, they interviewed people in nine other countries. Americans, like most other people they polled, found blue landscapes most appealing. Some U.S. results follow.

Question: Do you...?

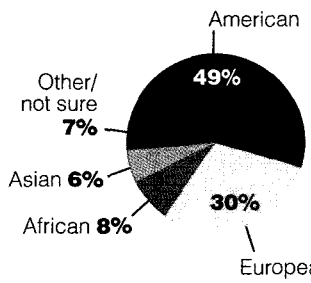


Of those who have art in their homes...
78% have at least one photograph other than a family snapshot
77% have at least one print or poster
73% have at least one piece of sculpture or a statue
72% have at least one original painting
45% have at least one reproduction of an original painting

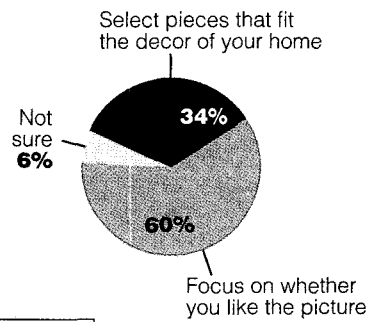
Question: When you select pictures, photographs, or other pieces of art for your home, do you...?



Question: If you had to choose from the following list, which type of art would you say you prefer...?

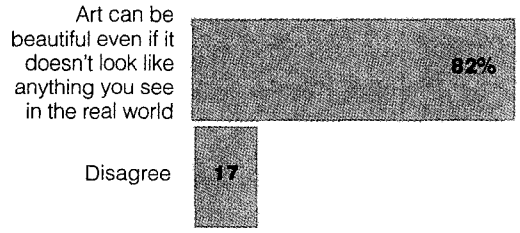


Question: When choosing art, do you...?



Note: Asked of the 77 percent who said they had art (other than family snapshots) in their homes.

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement...?



Question: Do you have...?

	A very favorable impression	Favorable	Unfavorable	Never heard of/Don't know
Norman Rockwell	43%	38%	7%	12%
Rembrandt	32	46	7	14
Claude Monet	24	33	5	37
Pablo Picasso	20	45	19	16
Georgia O'Keeffe	11	19	5	65
Andy Warhol	9	24	33	34
Salvador Dali	9	23	17	51
LeRoy Neiman	5	20	10	66
Jackson Pollock	4	11	7	77

Note: Sample is registered voters.
Source: Martilla and Kiley for Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid in conjunction with The Nation Foundation, 1993.

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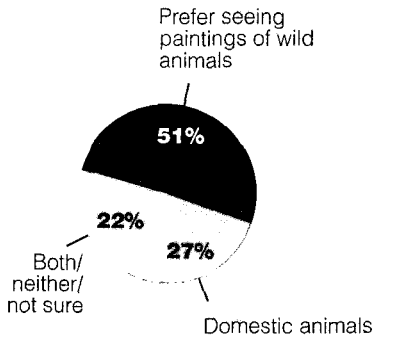
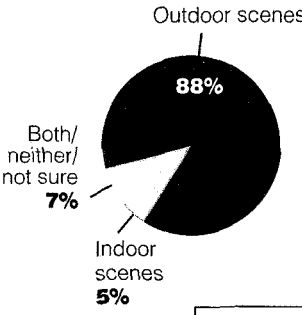
Responses to the questions below enabled the artists to create a painting that suited Americans' artistic tastes. They believed that the popularity of a blue landscape in the United States and elsewhere stemmed in part from its ability to convey solitude, to make people "hermits" for a short period of time in our busy world. Blue's popularity is not new. The painters quote Ruskin: "Blue color is everlastingly appointed by the Deity to be a source of delight."

Question: Would you say that you...?



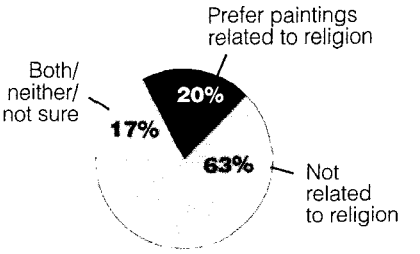
Note: Eighty-nine percent said they preferred animals in their natural setting; 4 percent in studio or portrait settings.

Question: Would you rather see paintings of...?

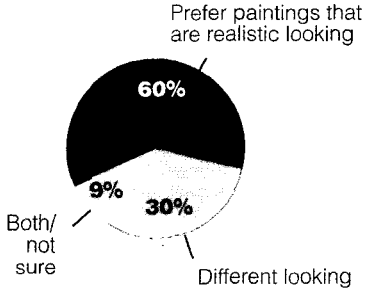


Note: Of those who said they liked outdoor scenes or both, a strong plurality (49%) said they liked lakes/rivers/oceans best, followed by forests (19%). Fall was the preferred season (33%) followed by spring (26%), summer (16%), and winter (15%). Of those who said they liked indoor scenes or both, domestic scenes with people were the most popular type (37%), followed by still-lifes of flowers (21%).

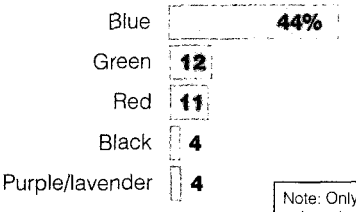
Question: Do you tend to...?



Question: Which is closer to your view...?

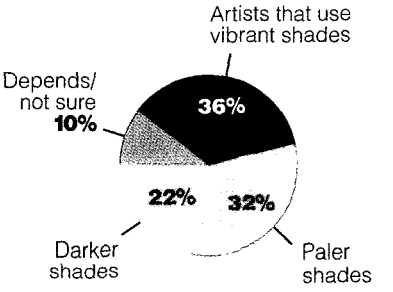


Question: If you had to name one color as your favorite color ...?

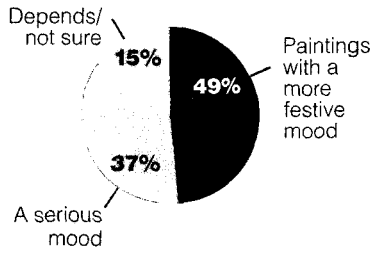


Note: Only top five colors shown.

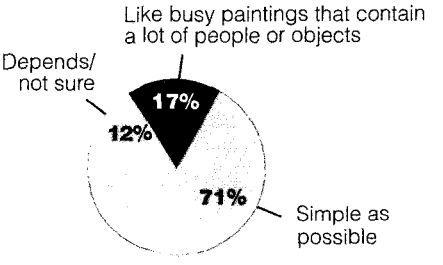
Question: Which would you say you prefer...?



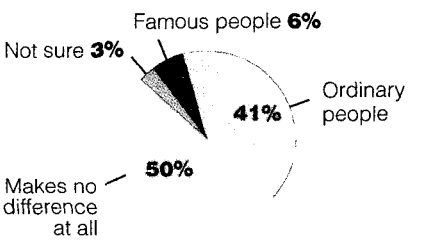
Question: Do you enjoy...?



Question: How about the painting itself—do you...?



Question: Do you prefer paintings of...?



Note: Sample is of registered voters.
Source: Martilla and Kiley for Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid in conjunction with The Nation Foundation, 1993.

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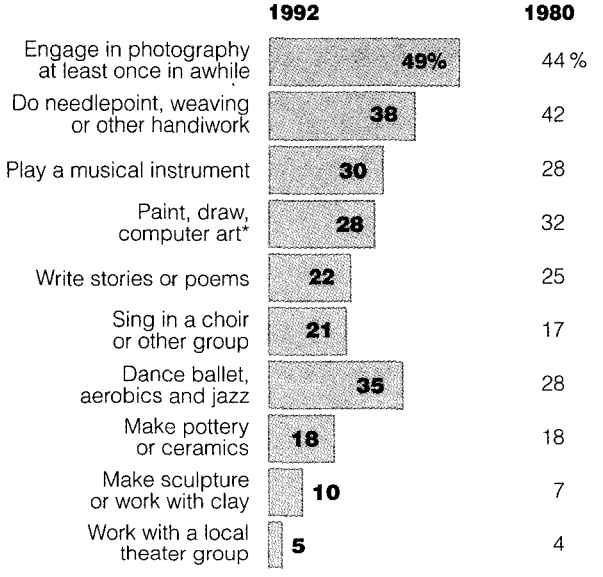
Good Art, Bad Art (continued)

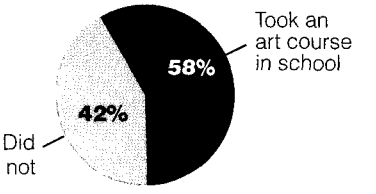
As the previous two pages show, Americans know what they like in art. A majority of Americans remember taking an art course in school. In terms of their own artistic activities, a near majority say they take photographs once in a while, and around three in ten play a musical instrument or paint. Slightly more than two in ten write stories or poems. Attendance at musicals is higher than attendance at fine arts performances. A solid majority opposes more money in taxes for the arts.

Question: Let me read you some activities that some people do at least every once in awhile. Please tell me whether you yourself...?



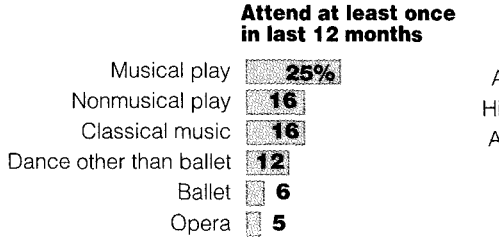
Note: *The wording in 1980 included "graphic arts such as etching."
Source: LH Associates for Philip Morris Companies, latest that of 1992.

Question: When you were in school, did you take any courses that allowed you to learn about and enjoy the arts?



Source: LH Associates for Philip Morris Companies, latest that of 1992.

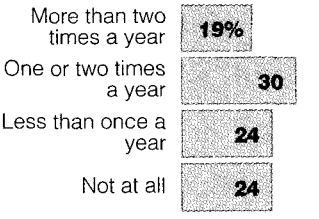
Question: Did you ...?



Source: Richard Peterson (Vanderbilt University), et al. for the National Endowment for the Arts, 1997.

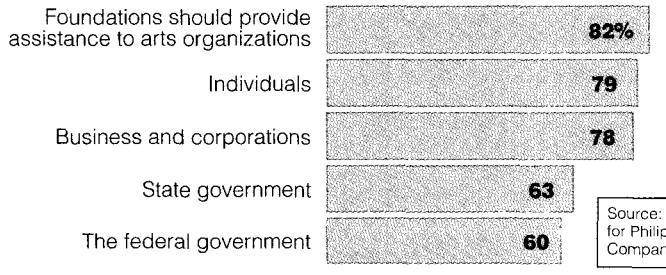
Question: How often do you ...?

Go to art museums



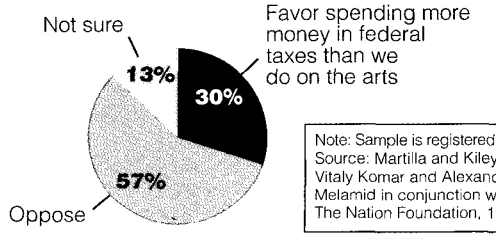
Note: The following were given as major reasons for those who said they go less than once a year or not at all: not enough spare time (44%), no art museum in the area (34%), their level of comfort and knowledge about art (24%), dislike of looking at art (12%), and cost (11%). Sample is registered voters.
Source: Martilla and Kiley for Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid in conjunction with The Nation Foundation, 1993.

Question: If arts organizations—such as art museums, dance, opera, and theater groups and symphony orchestras—need financial assistance to operate, do you feel that ...?



Source: LH Associates for Philip Morris Companies, 1992.

Question: Would you...?



Note: Sample is registered voters.
Source: Martilla and Kiley for Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid in conjunction with The Nation Foundation, 1993.

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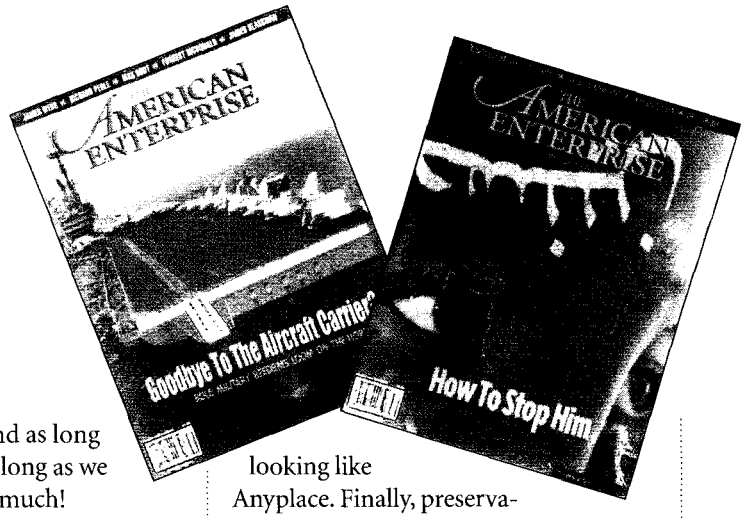
the Mail



After reading "Fight Terror: Drill in America" (SCAN, December 2001) I find I am in agreement with everything said—except the mention of "economic, safe, and clean power from nuclear energy." Economic? Safe? The Long Island Lighting Company's Nuclear Power Plant was so costly and unsafe it was shut down before we even got one watt of power. Clean? We would be counting hundreds of thousands, not thousands, of dead had terrorists struck the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant instead of the World Trade Center. So, let us stay with your opening premise—Fight Terror, *Drill* in America.

Bill Lynch
Miller Place, New York

Aside from safety concerns, and figuring in waste disposal and other costs, the real cost of nuclear power has never been resolved. No wonder the public is still somewhat uneasy about nuclear power (OPINION PULSE, September 2001).

Cleanup costs at existing processing sites are projected into the billions. There is also the matter of overall efficiency or lack thereof. A study performed at the University of Wyoming in the early 1970s indicated that the equivalent of up to half the electrical output of a U.S. nuclear power plant is required for mining, concentration, and enrichment of the uranium fuel.

The overall efficiency of atomic power can be less than 5 percent of the theoretical thermal rating of the nuclear fuel. The same remarks can be extended to wind-powered electrical generating systems, solar collectors/converters, and fuel cells.

Hence, then, a toast to the conveniences of oil and natural gas, wherever they may be found—and as long as they may last, and as long as we may not be gouged too much!

E. J. Hoffman
Laramie, Wyoming

Boy, did you guys miss this one! ("Goodbye to the Aircraft Carrier?" October/November 2001). With the hostility of the Arab world unlikely to abate anytime soon, the supercarrier is now more valuable than ever.

Christopher Sanders
Arlington, Texas

Far from having "gone seriously awry" as Catesby Leigh suggests ("Historic Preservation Goes Awry," July/August 2001), today's preservation movement is doing just what it has always done: saving the places that tell America's story.

America's history, after all, didn't end in 1800 or 1865 or 1900 and contemporary life has been shaped by recent history as surely as by the people and events of centuries ago. The incinerator whose preservation Mr. Leigh derides is a tangible link with Georgetown's once-gritty waterfront, and part of the community's "essential character."

Preservation definitely isn't about pickling buildings in what Leigh calls "preservationist formaldehyde." Most preservation efforts today focus on finding viable new uses for older buildings as part of the fabric of daily life. Incorporating the incinerator and other historic structures into the overall design is likely to give the Georgetown project a more distinctive character (a highly marketable commodity, incidentally) than it might otherwise enjoy. It is also a good way to keep the Georgetown that residents love and visitors flock to see from looking like Anyplace. Finally, preservation isn't just about aesthetics. It's worth remembering that it hasn't been too long since Victorian houses and Art Deco hotels were almost universally ridiculed as architectural monstrosities too ugly to be worth preserving.

It is eminently rational to save an old building because it is a distinctive piece of architecture, or because it still has plenty of use left in it, or because it represents a link with the past that needs to be maintained.

Richard Moe, President
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Washington, D.C.

I am an African American neo-liberal and U.S. Navy Reservist. I am struck by the disproportionate number of low-income citizens of all races who choose the military as a form of national service. It seems as if those citizens with higher incomes consider the armed forces beneath their social station.

College educated detractors will cheer from the sidelines but don't expect them to sacrifice the bottom line for a service person's meager pay. All socioeconomic groups must share in the risks. Too many liberals and conservatives prefer the comfort of armchair generalship.

Nadra Enzi
Mayport, Florida

CORRECTION: The photo reproduced on page 45 of our December issue was used without the permission of the photographer, because true ownership of the image was misrepresented to us. The photo is property of Nigel Parry.

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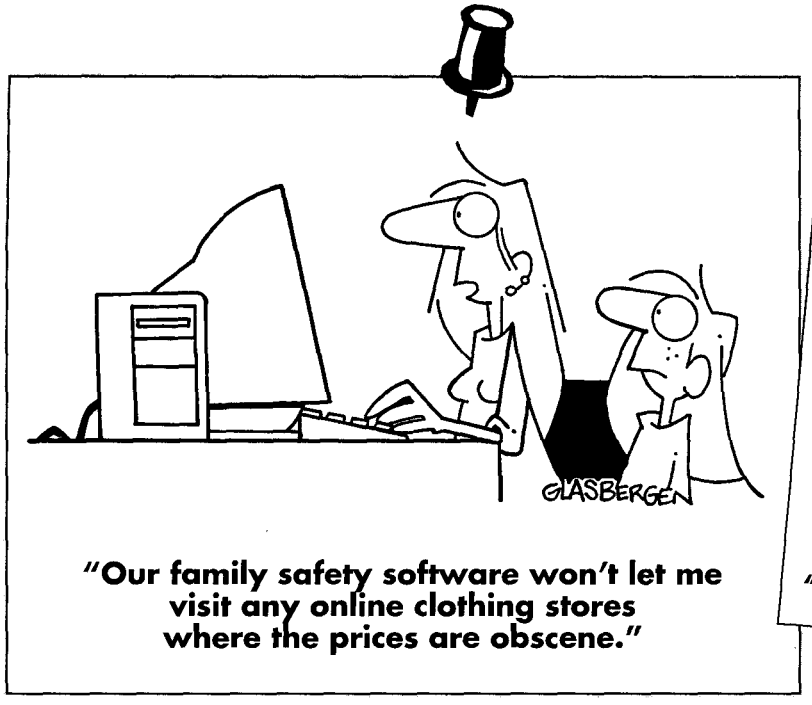
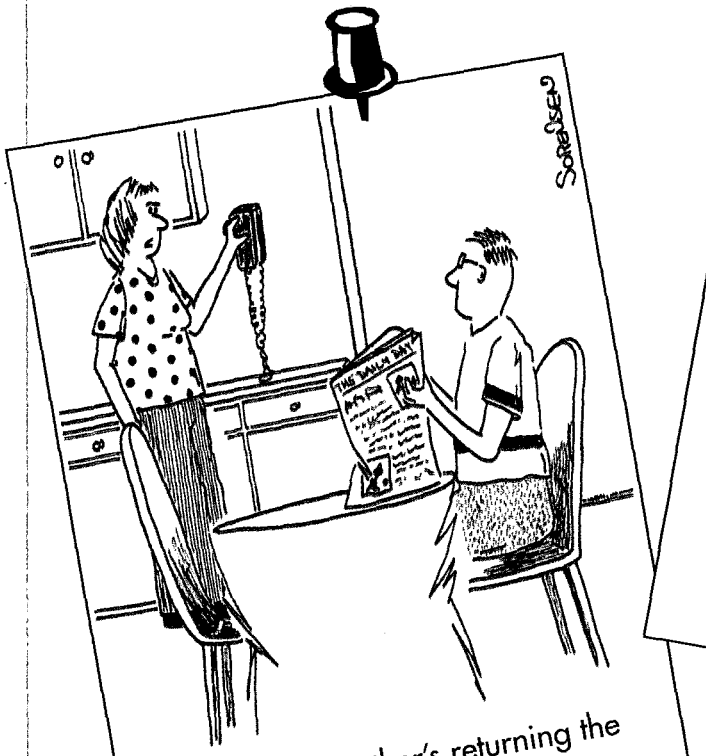
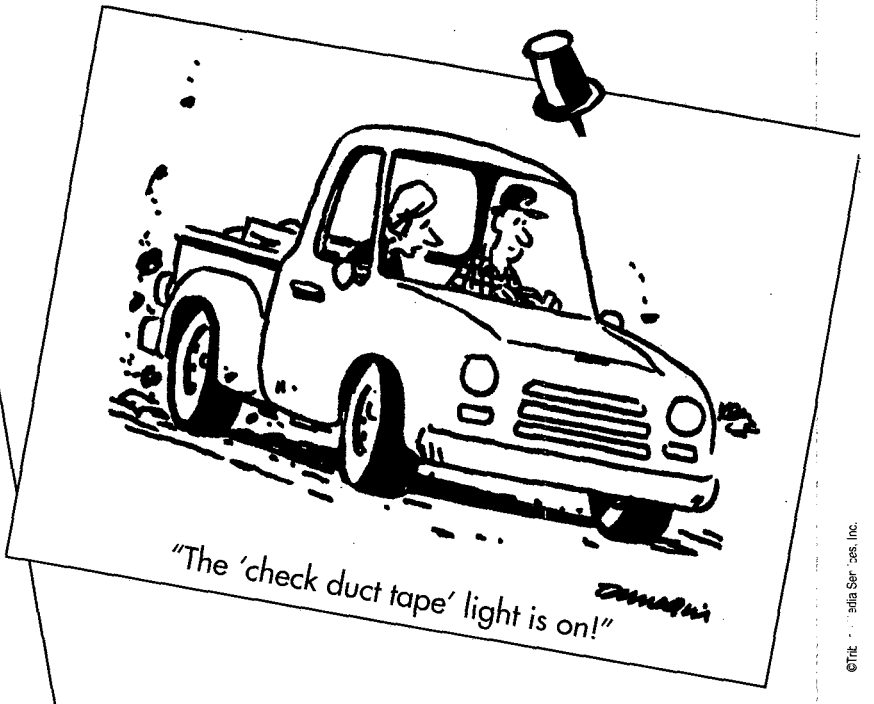


"Our family safety software won't let me visit any online clothing stores where the prices are obscene."

"You know what I miss? The twentieth century."



"Now your mother's returning the gift certificates we got her."



"The 'check duct tape' light is on!"

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Matthew Stevenson

Letters of Transit

Essays on Travel, History, Politics, and Family Life Abroad

New from *TAE* contributor Matthew Stevenson—a collection of sparkling essays capturing daily life and travels in locales ranging from Afghanistan to Peleliu.

"...would rather wander the world with Matthew Stevenson than with anyone else I know..."—Simon Winchester

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Every week
on PBS
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for time and
channel

Think
TANK
with
BEN WATTENBERG

What did viewers think of our "Art Under the Radar" Special?

"Thank you for bringing out what so many of us have known or suspected for so long; that there is indeed merit to representational art, and that the various "isms" of modern art and its tributary aberrations have become every bit as outdated and passé as they alleged the earlier disciplines to have become.

I cannot tell you how much I appreciated the program on the "re-birth" of art that is beautiful vs. modern art....
Great, on target, spectacular, beautiful, educational....

Great program you gave on the decline of the avant-garde movement....

Very good job at explaining a topic that has been always difficult to explain. Your examples and insights made quick work through the history of popular art, without lacking in any way for content.

Someone has finally shouted out what many of us in the art world have known for years: "The Emperor has no clothes!"....
but the problem is that "they" want all of us to be naked as well.

Thank you!!! This program on what the current trend toward creating "shock art" needed to be said, what it is and what it isn't. One of the best."

PBS

THINK TANK: THE PBS PROGRAM ON IDEAS

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